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SIN AND THE STORY OF SALVATION: THE THEOLOGY OF ATONEMENT IN LIGHT OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVE THEOLOGY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Mark J. Ortwein

May 2015

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SIN AND THE STORY OF SALVATION: THE THEOLOGY OF ATONEMENT

IN LIGHT OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVE THEOLOGY

By

Mark J. Ortwein

Approved March 26, 2015

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ABSTRACT

SIN AND THE STORY OF SALVATION: THE THEOLOGY OF ATONEMENT IN LIGHT OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVE THEOLOGY

By

Mark J. Ortwein

May 2015

Dissertation supervised by William M. Wright IV, Ph.D.

Contemporary atonement theology offers three general conceptions of the cross: objective, subjective, and dramatic, which corresponds to Gustaf Aulén's classic tripartite typology. Although these different views are important since they contribute to a rich soteriology, when addressing the topic of atonement, or reconciliation proper, the objective type, promoted in satisfaction and penal substitution theories, are by comparison more compatible with Scripture when considering its larger narrative structure. This compatibility is attributable to the seriousness with which they construe the problem of sin that alienates humanity from God and places them in a predicament from which they are unable to extricate themselves. The cross, according to the objective type, is then disclosed as the only solution to the human situation since it is God in Christ who can make satisfactory atonement. Demonstrating the centrality of these themes in

Scripture and the comparative consistency of these two theories with the canonical narrative in the works of their leading proponents, Anselm of Canterbury and John Calvin respectively, is the primary goal of this dissertation which will bring fresh insight unto the subject of atonement theology for today.

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I would like to thank the Department of Theology for inviting me to Duquesne University to pursue this degree in systematic theology. My time here as both a student and teacher has been a great experience. There are many colleagues and faculty members in this program whose advice and encouragement helped me complete this dissertation. In particular, I am thankful for the direction Dr. Wright has given me on this project. In addition to keeping it on a proper trajectory, through his patience and hard work, his concern for my future academic career in our many discussions, was a true blessing. Similarly, I would also like to thank Dr. Vasko for being a mentor to me since my first semester in this program. As her teaching assistant for four semesters, I have been able to develop both my pedagogical and academic skills. I am also thankful for the scholarship of Dr. Bucur especially for introducing me to the topic of biblical theology. His seminar on this approach to interpreting and appropriating Scripture served as an inspiration for the methodology of this dissertation. Yet my completion of this project would not have been possible apart from the prayers, encouragement, and financial support of my mom Kathryn A. Ortwein, along with my brothers, sisters, and friends. Foremost, though, I thank God my Father and Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior who, through the power of his Holy Spirit, guided and motivated me throughout this dissertation, to help me articulate this "good news" concerning the prospect of having one's sins forgiven and atonement with God through the cross which is my primary reason for entering this program and for selecting this subject for my project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Abstract iv

Acknowledgement vi

Chapter One: Atonement Theology: A Review of Three Types 1

1.1. Gustaf Aulén's Tripartite Typology 4

1.1.1. Atonement Theology: The Objective Type 5

1.1.1.1. Satisfaction Theory: Anselm of Canterbury 5

1.1.1.1.1. *Cur Deus Homo*: Context and Approach 8

1.1.1.1.2. *Cur Deus Homo*: Theology and Christology 13

1.1.1.1.3. Satisfaction Theory on the Problem of Sin 18

1.1.1.1.4. Satisfaction Theory on the Forgiveness of Sin 25

1.1.1.2. Penal Substitution Theory: John Calvin 32

1.1.2. Atonement Theology: The Subjective Type 38

1.1.2.1. Moral Influence Theory: Peter Abelard 38

1.1.3. Atonement Theology: The Dramatic Type 44

1.1.3.1. Christus Victor Theory: Gustaf Aulén 44

1.1.3.2. Narrative Christus Victor Theory: J. Denny Weaver 52

1.2. Defining the Problem 59

1.3. Atonement Theology: A Biblical Narrative View 64

Chapter Two: The Problem of Sin: A Biblical Narrative View 73

2.1. Sin and Exile: The Work of N. T. Wright 73

2.1.1. The New Testament within the Second Temple Narrative 75

2.1.2. The Second Temple Worldview: Land, Torah, and Temple 77
2.1.3. Sin and the Prospect of Salvation: First Century Judaism 80
2.2. Major Biblical Images for Sin: The Work of Gary A. Anderson..... 83
2.2.1. Debt and Almsgiving 91
2.2.2. Debt and Satisfaction 94
2.3. Christian Anthropology in New Testament Theology: The Work of
Frank J. Matera 98
2.3.1. The Synoptic Tradition on the Problem of Sin 99
2.3.2. The Pauline Tradition on the Problem of Sin 110
2.3.3. The Johannine Tradition on the Problem of Sin 118
2.3.4. Other Voices on the Problem of Sin 122
2.3.5. Summary..... 126
Chapter Three: The Forgiveness of Sin: A Biblical Narrative View 128
3.1. Forgiveness of Sins as the End of Exile: The Work of N. T. Wright..... 129
3.1.1. Judaism and the Early Church 129
3.1.2. Israel and the Kingdom of God..... 134
3.1.3. Themes in the Synoptic Gospel's Soteriology
in Light of Second Temple Jewish Theology 139
3.1.4. Paul on Second Temple Judaism and Salvation in Christ 148
3.2. Soteriology in New Testament Theology: The Work of Frank J. Matera 155
3.2.1. The Synoptic Tradition on the Forgiveness of Sin 156
3.2.1.1. The Good News in Mark..... 158
3.2.1.2. The Forgiveness of Debt in the Gospel of Matthew..... 161

3.2.1.3. Salvation in the Gospel of Luke and Acts 164
3.2.2. The Pauline Tradition on the Forgiveness of Sin 168
3.2.2.1. Substitutionary Atonement in Corinthians 169
3.2.2.2. God's Love in Galatians and Romans 172
3.2.2.3. Redeeming Debt in Colossians and Ephesians 177
3.2.2.4. Soteriology in the Pastoral Epistles 180
3.2.3. The Johannine Tradition on the Forgiveness of Sin 182
3.2.3.1. The Lamb of God in the Gospel of John 183
3.2.3.2. The Cross and Expiation in the Johannine Epistles 186
3.2.4. Other Voices on the Forgiveness of Sin 187
3.2.4.1. Sacrificial Atonement in Hebrews 187
3.2.4.2. The Catholic Epistles on Redemption 189
3.2.4.3. The Lamb Who Conquers in Revelation 193
3.2.5. Summary 195
Chapter Four: Anselmian Atonement Theology in Light of Sin and Forgiveness in Biblical Narrative Theology 198
4.1. The Objective Type in Light of Biblical Narrative Theology 199
4.1.1. Satisfaction Theory in Light of Biblical Narrative Theology 200
4.1.1.1. Biblical Narrative Anthropology and Satisfaction Theory 200
4.1.1.2. Biblical Narrative Soteriology and Satisfaction Theory 203
4.1.1.3. Satisfaction Theory and the Biblical Narrative 207
4.2. Anselmian Atonement Theology for Today 210
4.2.1. Biblical Narrative Theology and the Problem of Sin 211

4.2.1.1. Biblical Narrative Theology and Original Sin 212

4.3. The Solution to Sin in Biblical Narrative Theology 215

4.3.1. Atonement Theology and Soteriology 218

4.3.2. Theology and the Objective Type 220

4.3.3. Christology and the Objective Type 224

4.4. Biblical Narrative Theology and the Atonement Types 226

4.5. Conclusion: Anselmian Atonement Theology for Today 229

4.5.1. The Contribution of Biblical Narrative Theology 229

4.5.2. The Contribution to Theology and Christology 232

4.5.3. The Contribution of Hamartiology 235

4.5.4. The Contribution to Atonement Theology 238

4.5.5. Contemporary Implication and Summary 241

Bibliography 245

CHAPTER ONE: ATONEMENT THEOLOGY: A REVIEW OF THREE TYPES

In the opening chapter of his formative work *Christus Victor*, Gustaf Aulén contends, "The subject of the Atonement is absolutely central in Christian theology; and it is directly related to that of the nature of God."[1] Aulén's view continues to resonate among contemporary theologians who view the cross as Christianity's primary symbol and therefore its essential doctrine, because through the death of Christ, reconciliation between God and humanity is effected and God's characteristics are revealed.[2] Despite this general understanding, atonement theology today contains a plurality of views with each bringing their unique perspective to this vital subject.[3] These diverse theologies are important because together they offer a rich soteriology.

Prominent among these conceptions is Anselm of Canterbury's satisfaction theory that is derived from his renowned treatise *Cur Deus Homo* (Why God Became Man) which perceives the death of the "God-man," Jesus Christ, as satisfactory payment which restores God's honor taken from him by human sin. Anselm's view is considered to be the first "developed doctrine of the Atonement,"[4] and its influence on Christian theology since its publication is inestimable. The success of his model can be attributed, in part, to Christian theology's lack of a comprehensive atonement theology prior to the medieval

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[1] Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, American Edition, trans. A. G. Hebert (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), 12.

[2] "The English word 'atonement' is derived from the words 'at-one-ment,' to make two parties at one, to reconcile two parties one to another. It means essentially reconciliation…In current usage, the phrase 'to atone for' means the undertaking of a course of action designed to undo the consequences of a wrong act with a view to the restoration of the relationship broken by the wrong act." James Atkinson, "Atonement," in *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Alan Richardson (London: SCM Press LTD, 1969), 18. (From Vincent Brümmer, *Atonement, Christology and Trinity: Making Sense of Christian Doctrine* [Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2005], 65.) This definition of atonement will be used throughout this project.

[3] "Theology" references "Christian theology" in this project and acknowledges, deferentially, its distinction from theologies of the monotheistic faiths of Judaism and Islam.

[4] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 1.

era of Anselm since many theologians, particularly during the patristic period, were focused primarily on issues of Christology and Trinitarian theology rather than soteriology.[5] Though Anselm's theory continues to influence discourse on atonement theology, nearly every proposal that has emerged since the publication of his treatise has been developed as an alternative to his conception of the cross which they regard as problematic.[6]

One of the initial critiques of satisfaction theory came from Peter Abelard, a contemporary of Anselm, who proposed his noted moral influence theory in reaction to what he believed to be a mistaken view of the cross since it portrays God as angry and vindictive. Abelard's alternative theory suggests that the cross, rather, instigates God's love within humanity moving them to repentance and reciprocation of this love. Gustaf Aulén's Christus Victor motif is another main counterproposal to Anselm's atonement theology. This view retrieves the "classic" idea of the cross, which was prevalent though latent since the patristic era, which he believed to be abandoned by Anselm and Abelard.[7] Aulén's proposal suggests that Christ, through his death and resurrection, is to be construed primarily as the "Victor" over the "evil forces" of the cosmos which have subjugated the world. Narrative Christus Victor theory, promoted by J. Denny Weaver, subsumes the classic tenets of the Christus Victor motif yet perceives the death of Jesus as resistance to violence. Weaver's view is among the latest and most thorough critiques

[5] Aulén (*Christus Victor*, 1) states that "in regard to the Atonement," since the patristic period, "only hesitating efforts were made along a variety of lines, and the ideas which found expression were usually clothed in fantastic mythological dress."

[6] G. C. Foley has written concerning *Cur Deus Homo*, "Perhaps no other theological statement has been so universally rejected as a whole, but whose essential characteristics have so completely coloured subsequent thinking." George Cadwalader Foley, *Anselm's Theory of the Atonement*, (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909), 115.

[7] The "classic" view of the atonement is synonymous with the ransom theory in patristic theology which proposes that God pays a ransom in the currency of the cross to release humanity from Satan's captivity.

of satisfaction theory and gives voice to the concerns of liberation, feminist, and womanist theologians who find Anselm's avocation of violence disconcerting. Apart from the penal substitution theory of John Calvin, who retrieves the primary tenets of satisfaction theory by contending that Christ, on the cross, bore the consequences of human sin, every major atonement theology offers a critique of, and an alternative to, Anselm's theory.[8]

Despite their collective differences with satisfaction theory, there is general agreement that the cross is the solution to the problem of sin. Further, their conceptions of sin and salvation are derived from their appropriation of Scripture which is used as a primary source to support their views.[9] Yet their divergence suggests that they are interpreting Scripture differently. This can be attributed to the varied passages or books of the Bible they use to justify their conception. But when comparing these theologies to the narrative emerging from the biblical canon, taken as a whole, Anselm's satisfaction theory is the most compatible with this larger story. This is evident in his construal of the problem of sin and forgiveness which is consistent throughout the canonical text. The primary goal of this dissertation is to demonstrate first, how the two major themes of sin and forgiveness are operative in the biblical story, and second, how Anselm's theory emerges as comparatively more consistent with the canonical narrative. In light of its

[8] The atonement theologies listed above: satisfaction, moral influence, penal substitution theories, the Christus Victor motif (and ransom theory upon which it is based), and narrative Christus Victor theory are representative of the mainline views of the cross in theology today. These prominent conceptions appear in a brief historical survey of atonement theology in Andrew Sung Park's *Triune Atonement: Christ's Healing for Sinners, Victims, and the Whole Creation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009) 1-34.

[9] In this project, the term "Scripture" refers to the Christian canon comprised of the Old and New Testaments. Also, "theology" references "Christian theology" in this project and acknowledges, deferentially, its distinction from theologies of the monotheistic faiths of Judaism and Islam. Additionally, a distinction is made between atonement doctrine and atonement theory. The former affirms that the cross as the vehicle of reconciliation between God and humanity, and the latter is a reflection on how the cross brings reconciliation.

greater compatibility with Scripture, satisfaction theory and its later derivative penal substitution theory, then, should be viewed as the truer representative of Christian atonement theology.

1.1. Gustaf Aulén's Tripartite Typology

Aulén's classic typology in *Christus Victor* will serve as a structuring mechanism to compare Anselm's theory, particularly his understanding of sin and forgiveness, with the atonement theologies that are in dialogue with him.[10] Aulén's three types—objective, subjective, and dramatic which correspond to the traditional categories of satisfaction theory, moral influence theory, and the "classic," or Christus Victor motif, respectively—remain valid for identifying the principal differences among these diverse positions.[11] Though written as a historical survey, Aulén's work was primarily a critique of the atonement theology of his day which he believed to be "in need of thorough revision."[12] His study was an attempt to refocus this subject by recovering a New Testament view of the cross along with the writings of key theologians whose work he believed best appropriated these texts. Similar to the sequence with which he studies these types, this project's literature review will begin with a study of Anselm's theory, specifically in *Cur*

[10] In his forward to the paperback edition of *Christus Victor*, Jaroslav Pelikan (*Christus Victor*, xi) refers to Aulén's work as a "'a modern classic'" since it remains "the starting point of countless essays, articles, and books on the doctrine of the Atonement" despite its original publication in 1931. Though some of these theories have emerged since the publication of Aulén's text, his typology is nevertheless relevant for categorizing these views based on their understanding of the object of the cross.

[11] Aulén (*Christus Victor*, 157) refers to the dramatic type as an "idea," "motif," or "theme" rather than a "theory" since it is not predicated upon medieval rational speculation. Charles Partee also distinguishes these types "dramatic and dualistic," which are characteristic of the Christus Victor motif in comparison to satisfaction theory's "objective and rational" view, and Abelard's "subjective and moral" alternative. Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 158.

[12] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 1. Aulén (Ibid.) adds that atonement theology "has, indeed, received a large share of attention at the hands of theologians; yet it has been in many important respects seriously misinterpreted. [Therefore it] is in the hope of making some contribution to this urgently needed revision that this work has been undertaken."

Deus Homo, and the penal substitution model Calvin which together comprise the objective type. This will be followed by a study of the two opposing types, subjective and dramatic, that outlines their basic critiques of Anselm's theory, and a summary of their counterproposals to reveal the primary issues that differentiates these views.

1.1.1. Atonement Theology: The Objective Type

1.1.1.1. Satisfaction Theory: Anselm of Canterbury

Aulén first analyzes satisfaction theory, which he considers to be the "real beginnings of a thought-out doctrine" of the atonement and, accordingly, "comes to hold a position of first-rate importance in the history of dogma."[13] He identifies this theory as the "objective" type since "God is the object of Christ's atoning work, and is reconciled through the satisfaction made to His justice."[14] Anselm's theory is frequently referred by Aulén as the "Latin type" that emerged during the "Middle Ages,"[15] to underscore that this theory developed independently of eastern patristic thought whom he considers to be the guarantors of New Testament soteriology. Further, like Abelard's subjective view, the objective position emerged from medieval scholastic reasoning, therefore it is appropriately called a "theory" of atonement in contrast to an "idea" or "motif" like that of the classic view of the patristic fathers. Although Abelard's subjective theory receives some attention in Aulén's historical survey, it is Anselm's Latin conception that is the primary focus of his attention since it has been the most influential view and, consequently, responsible for the current status atonement theology.

[13] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 1.
[14] Ibid., 2.
[15] Ibid., 143.

Anselm, Aulén contends, "repressed, even if he could not entirely overcome, the old mythological account of Christ's work as a victory over the devil" that was prevalent in patristic atonement thinking.[16] Anselm in *Cur Deus Homo* acknowledges that his work is in part a reaction to this "ransom" motif that emerged during the patristic era. Similar to ransom theorists, Anselm acknowledges that sin is what separates humanity from God, and finds objectionable the idea that Satan is involved in the transaction of the atonement since he believed the devil to have "no jurisdiction over man."[17] God's anger toward humanity is attributed to human sin which began when they failed to honor him by yielding to the temptation of the devil whom they freely allowed to overcome them. Both the devil and humankind, then, "belong to [no one] but God" and, subsequently, the only power the devil can exercise is that which has been given him. The devil however used this power wrongly against his Creator, according to Anselm, to "[seduce] his fellow-servant to desert their common Lord."[18] Consequently, humanity's debt, which is a product of human sin, is not owed to the devil as some of Anselm's patristic predecessors suggest, rather, to God alone whose honor they have taken from him. R. W. Southern in his noted study of Anselm's work further states,

> Anselm was unlikely ever to have entertained such a proposition as that of the Devil having rights. His whole concept of sin meant that it could neither create nor convey rights, least of all for the Devil, whose supreme sin had made him irretrievably lower that the least created thing in the universe. Consequently, any theory of the Devil's rights as the cause of divine activity was excluded from the start.[19]

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[16] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 2.

[17] Anselm of Canterbury. "Why God Became Man [*Cur Deus Homo*]," in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, Oxford World's Classics, eds. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), I.7. Davies' and Evans' edition of *Cur Deus Homo* will be referenced throughout this project.

[18] Ibid.

[19] R.W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 205. G. R. Evans further adds that Anselm "cannot accept that the Devil can have any rights in the matter. Those who have submitted themselves to him as sinners he has stolen from God their rightful

Anselm eliminates the role of the devil in redemption at the onset of his treatise not simply to refute ransom theorists but "to enforce more completely the submission of Man to God."[20]

Although the role of the devil is removed from the specific transaction of the atonement, the devil, as God's antithesis and humanity's adversary, appears regularly throughout *Cur Deus Homo* (I.7; I.22; II.21). For instance, "salvation," or being "saved" for Anselm is not only deliverance "from our sins and from [God's] own anger and from hell," but "from the power of the devil that God ransomed us."[21] Further, he writes that God in Christ "came himself to drive out the devil on our behalf because we were incapable of this, and he brought back the kingdom of heaven for us."[22] Similar to humanity, the devil is a creature of the Creator, and yet sinned against God through the wrongful exercise of their free will.[23] Therefore both the devil and humanity according Anselm belong to God alone therefore the only power the devil can exercise is that which has been given by God. Humanity's sin-debt is not owed to the devil, then, as some of Anselm's patristic predecessors suggest, rather to God whose honor they have taken from him. Yet Anselm's theory in general, and his variance with patristic thought regarding the

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Lord. It cannot be necessary to pay a ransom to a usurper and a thief. Thus Anselm puts the Devil out of the picture at the outset (CDH I.7)." G. R. Evans, *Anselm* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow Publishing, 1989), 74. F. W. Dillstone also notes that "Anselm's argument was the firm rejection of the Devil and his role in the drama of man's redemption." F. W. Dillstone, *The Christian Understanding of Atonement* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), 190. Dillstone (Ibid.) further states Anselm rejected the prevailing notion of the Devil depicted in the medieval art of his day which often portrayed, "Christ in conflict with the Devil, of the harrowing of the Devil's domain by the mighty Victor, of the Devil's rights which had to be recognized and justly met. To leave all these aside and to concentrate attention upon God dealing directly with man was in one sense to exalt man—no longer was he visualized as the helpless vassal of the Devil but as one who has failed by his own weakness to achieve his true destiny—and in another sense to sharpen the problem of redemption so far as God was concerned."

[20] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape,* 209.

[21] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo,* I.5.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Anselm of Canterbury. "On the Fall of the Devil," in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, Oxford World's Classics, eds. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 4.

role of the devil in redemption in particular, was not "wholly original," according to Aulén, since "the stones lay ready to hand; but it was he who erected them into a monumental building."[24]

1.1.1.1.1. *Cur Deus Homo*: Context and Approach

Some of the major criticisms of Anselm's theory are in regard to his "anachronistic" language, and his speculative reasoning which are both products of his Medieval context. Anselm's use of terminology such as "satisfaction" for instance, and concepts such as sin being an offense to God's "honor," clearly reflects the feudal system of late 11th and early 12th Century Europe which was the setting for *Cur Deus Homo*.[25] Anselm, a Benedictine monk of Bec in Normandy, and later Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote his treatise amidst growing tension between the church and the Holy Roman Empire. The era of scholastic thought to which Anselm is credited as its forerunner was vastly becoming the predominant theological approach in which logic is instrumental to argumentation.[26] *Cur Deus Homo*, written between 1094 and 1098, and commended to Pope Urban II makes use of this innovative form of deductive reasoning. Written in two parts, the occasion for this treatise is a "response to request" Anselm receives for him to answer "the objections of unbelievers who reject the Christian faith because they think it

[24] Aulén (Ibid., 38-39) is referencing the work of Tertullian "whose teaching about Penance centres altogether round the satisfaction made by man for sin and the idea of merit." His work then "begins to quarry the stones for the future edifice of the Latin theory" and that "Cyprian first applies the ideas of Tertullian directly to the Atonement." For an extended study on the influence of Tertullian on Anselm's satisfaction model, reference, James Morgan, *The Importance of Tertullian in the Development of Christian Dogma* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Tubner & Co., 1928).

[25] *Cur Deus Homo*, or "Why God Became Man," is the abbreviated version of Anselm's original title presented in the form of a question, "'Why God became man in order that he might save mankind by his death, when it appears that he could have done this in another way.'" Davies and Evans, *Anselm of Canterbury*, 261 (fn. 2).

[26] George Sumner in his article on Anselm states that history regards him to be the "first great scholastic theologian," and, accordingly, the pioneer of this approach. George Sumner "Why Anselm Still Matters," *Anglican Theological Review* 1, (1995): 28.

militates against reason."[27] Since part of this treatise was already in circulation without Anselm's knowledge, he admits to finishing this work "in greater haste than would have been opportune,"[28] and believed it to be in need of further research and in need of additional material. Though incomplete, Anselm decided to publish the document to avoid confusion over what he believed the topic of atonement to be essential to theology.

Southern is among Anselm's primary defenders regarding Anselm's apparent antiquated language in *Cur Deus Homo*. He acknowledges that, "Anselm's feudal imagery is not likely at first sight to commend his thought to modern readers, and it has offered an easy target for indignation and ridicule."[29] Yet apart its dated imagery, Southern contends that his concepts are thoroughly situated in Christian tradition since "everything of importance in Anselm's argument can survive the removal of every trace of feudal imagery."[30] Yet many contemporary critics of *Cur Deus Homo* continue to mistake Anselm's argument because of an apparent misperception of language he employs. Perhaps no greater example of this is Anselm's use of the term "honor" in his treatise as an essential attribute of God. This term has often been misconstrued as God's "pride."[31] Yet for Anselm the term "honor," according to his feudal context, refers to the dutiful worship of God by his creation both animate and inanimate, which is a

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[27] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, Preface.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape,* 221. Southern (Ibid.) commends the work of John McIntryre to his readers who refutes that the argument that the language and concepts in *Cur Deus Homo* is "irretrievably feudal." John McIntyre, *St. Anselm and His Critics: A Re-Interpretation of the Cur Deus Homo* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1954).

[30] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape,* 221. Southern (Ibid.) further notes that "the power of *Cur Deus Homo* does not come from its feudal imagery, but from its combination of religious insight and logical force." Additionally, Anselm's terminology is often terse and direct which is contemporary readers would unlikely find commendable according to Southern (Ibid., 218) who writes, "[Anselm] never says more than he means, and he never means more than his argument requires."

[31] Craig Nessan for instance states that in Anselm's atonement theology "God is forced to exact Jesus' death to appease…God's own sense of wounded pride." Craig L. Nessan, "Violence and Atonement," *Dialog* 35, no. 1 (1996): 30.

participation in the beauty and order of the universe. This worship is the way order is preserved cosmologically. God's "honor," then, is "simply another word for the ordering of the universe in its due relationship to God."[32] Humanity in exercising their will against God by withholding their worship destroys this unity, order, and beauty of the universe. Since God is perfect, his honor must be restored which, accordingly, is "not to erase an injury to God,"[33] but to erase a stain on the universal order.[34]

Another term peculiar to *Cur Deus Homo*, and synonymous with Anselm's atonement theology, is the word "satisfaction." This word, in our contemporary context, appears to suggest that God the Father took pleasure in the punishment and death of his Son on the cross. This term, like that of "honor," has been misconstrued since it employed as a synonym for "recompense." Alister McGrath in his analysis of the satisfaction theory argues that in Anselm's context this word was derived from either Germanic laws which required the payment of perpetrators who violated the civil penitential system or ecclesial law which ran on a similar principle in which a sinner, upon confession, was obligated to make restitution through acts of charity or pilgrimages as a public sign of gratitude and forgiveness.[35] Satisfaction, or recompense, therefore was not directed at God but to God's honor that required recompense to reorder the universe.

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[32] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape,* 226.

[33] Ibid., 218.

[34] According to Anselm, though, "It is impossible for God to lose his honor. For either a sinner [those whose will is contrary to the honor or order of God] of his own accord repays what he owes or God takes it from him against his—the sinner's—will." Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo,* II.14. Additionally, the term "honour" for Anselm "meant that something much more than God's dignity was at stake. His very being was challenged by the falling away of humanity. Because he is all-powerful, he could not let that continue without doing something about it, or he would have been untrue to himself. He would not have been what he ought to be." Davies and Evans, *Anselm of Canterbury*, xviii.

[35] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 420.

Criticism of Anselm's language is matched only by critiques of the methodology he uses to support his atonement theology. *Cur Deus Homo,* similar to many other treatises of Anselm, is structured in the genre of a "Socratic dialogue" between Anselm and Boso.[36] Since deductive reasoning defines this approach, Anselm's theory is often assailed for its lack of biblical induction, according to his critics such as Aulén. Yet it is inaccurate to construe Anselm's treatise as non-biblical since he offers citations from Scripture throughout his work such as his reference to 1 Peter in his opening paragraph, "Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you" (1 Pet. 3:15), as justification for him and his students undertaking this project.[37] Southern suggests that this criticism is misguided since knowledge of Scripture was essential to medieval monasticism of which Anselm was a part. His biblical references throughout his treatise affirm his knowledge of Scripture, and he likewise assumes a certain familiarity of the Bible on the part of his readers. His choice not to rely on biblical citations was, according to G. R. Evans, a conscious move on Anselm's part. Evans states,

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[36] Davies and Evans, *Anselm of Canterbury*, xv. The "Socratic dialogue" was used by Plato therefore the text is a transcription of a "real conversation" between dialogue partners, usually a teacher and student. In *Cur Deus Homo,* Anselm cast himself in the role of teacher with Boso, a former pupil of Anselm, as the student who assumes that role of the "'unbeliever.'" (Ibid., xvii) Deme however argues that Boso is not an unbeliever but "the voice of the believer's constant quest for understanding." 60. This position has greater merit since Boso frequently uses the third person personal pronoun "we" regarding belief evident in passages such as *CDH*, 1.6 in which Boso alone defends Christian doctrine in light of the focus statement, "*How unbelievers find fault with our statement that God has ransomed us by his death, and that he has, in this way, showed his love toward us, and has come to drive out the devil on our behalf*." (Davies' and Evans' emphasis) Instances of the Socratic dialogue between teacher and student appear in Anselm's works such as *De Grammatico* (Dialogue on Literacy and the Literate), On Truth, On Free Will, and On the Fall of the Devil.

[37] Scriptural references appear throughout Anselm's treatise though he leaves it to the reader to decipher the specific book, chapter, and verse. In *Cur Deus Homo* I.9 for instance Anselm provides a commentary on "*the meaning of: 'He became obedient, even to death' [Phil. 2:8], and 'Because of which, God has raised him up' [Phil. 2:9], and 'I have not come to do my will' [cf. John 6:38], and 'He did not spare his own Son' [Rom. 8:32], and 'Not according to my will but yours' [Matt. 26:39]"* (Ibid., 276 [Davies and Evans emphasis and parenthetical insertions])

> Anselm explains that his method has been to set aside for purposes of argument all that we know of Christ by revelation through Scripture and to seek to demonstrate *remoto Christo*, without starting from the fact of Christ…He has chosen this means of demonstrating the absolute necessity of God's becoming man in order to meet the objections of 'unbelievers.'…He has, in other words, chosen the hardest route so as to gain proof which will convince the largest number of people.[38]

Anselm's concern is for his audience to arrive at the conclusion that it was reasonable for God to become human and chooses the route of deductive reasoning instead of only citing Scripture. Anselm, according to Evans, by employing the *remoto Christo* principle has "chosen the hardest route so as to gain the proof which will convince the largest number of people."[39] David Hogg on the topic of Anselm's approach writes, "[what] Anselm has done," by implementing his *remoto Christo* ("removing Christ from view"[40]) approach "is to introduce a type of argumentation we might call the impossibility of the contrary. In other words, Anselm is seeking to show the necessity of the incarnation and atoning work of Christ by demonstrating the absolute necessity of those acts in the light of the remaining evidence."[41] This is the essential purpose, according to Evans, why his treatise is set in the Socratic dialogue with his interlocutor Boso who is, presumably, an unbeliever and likely biblically uninformed. Anselm believes that the principles of logic and the gift of reason were given to the human race by God to gain understanding of the universe. The current treatise which emerged from this methodology, Anselm contends,

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[38] Evans, *Anselm*, 71. Anselm's *remoto Christo* approach, which takes Christ "off the table," asks the question "How could the very idea of the even make sense?" Sumner, "Why Anselm Still Matters," 30.

[39] Ibid., 72. Davies and Evans (*Anselm of Canterbury*, xvii) further note that "Anselm sets out to show that even if we know nothing about Christ through Christian revelation, it would be necessary to postulate that God became human in order to explain how the redemption of the human race could be possible."

[40] David Brown, "Anselm on atonement," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, eds. Brian Davis and Brian Leftow, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 282.

[41] David S. Hogg, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Beauty of Theology*, Great Theologians Series (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 159-160. Hogg (Ibid., 165) states that "Anselm applied the *remoto Christo* principle because he believed that the intrinsic beauty of God's truth is sufficiently apparent to persuade and to appeal to the 'spiritual aesthetic sense' of each person."

is highly congruent with Scripture and because direct citations from the Bible are infrequent he is willing to make corrections if by reason, or the truth of God's word, his work is found to be mistaken or deficient.[42]

1.1.1.1.2. *Cur Deus Homo*: Theology and Christology

In addition to various critiques of Anselm's language and approach he is perhaps most derided for his characterization the nature of God, or theology proper, and conception of Christ, or Christology. Anselm's position on theology, specifically his proof for the God's existence is explicated in his *Monologion* which is "a reflection or 'meditation' on the divine essence (*divina essentia*)," and its sequel the *Proslogion* that contains his noted ontological argument further clarifies his theological reflection.[43] These seminal treatises detail Anselm's conception of God regarding his greatness and supremacy,[44] along with his qualities such as harmony and beauty,[45] which inform subsequent writings like *Cur Deus Homo*. Maintaining the attributes of God such as his justice, love, power, and mercy without bringing them into conflict is what is principally at stake for Anselm in *Cur Deus Homo*. Predictably, then, "at the heart of Anselm's argument" in this treatise "is the honor of God" since order comprises all of God's qualities, and, accordingly, anything that diminishes his order is characterized as

[42] Anselm (*Cur Deus Homo*, II.22) at the close of his treatise, when probing the statement "That by the things which have been said, the truth of the Old Testament and New has been proved," writes, "If we have said anything that ought to be corrected, I do not refuse correction. But it is corroborated by the Testimony of Truth, as we think we have by means of logic discovered, we ought to attribute this not to ourselves but to God, who is blessed throughout all ages. Amen."

[43] Davies and Evans, *Anselm of Canterbury*, x.

[44] Anselm of Canterbury, "Monologion," in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, Oxford World's Classics, eds. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1.

[45] Anselm of Canterbury, "Proslogion," in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, Oxford World's Classics, eds. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 17.

malevolent.[46] "When a rational being," for instance, Anselm writes, "does not wish for what is right, he dishonours God, with regard to himself, since he is not willingly subordinating himself to God's governance, and is disturbing, as far as he is able, the order and beauty of the universe."[47] Anselm believes the universe to be interconnected, and any deviation from God's will, defined by God's attributes, disrupts the universal order. Since God is greatly concerned with order, any disorder must be regulated for God to be God. Anselm suggests that both the angelic and human realms have been given the freedom, or capacity, to either uphold or subvert God's created order. If the latter is chosen, he would argue, not only is the Creator offended but the created order is disrupted. Death is the ultimate consequence of this disruption which reregulates the universe. George Sumner, in his article on Anselm writes, "in the Bible, alignment with and connection to that righteous will, which is God, is itself life, and separation from it is death."[48] God's honor then will be upheld, according to Anselm, since "[God's] justice, his mercy, the order and beauty of the universe, and his involvement with his creatures, are woven together, and one thread cannot be pulled out in disregard of the rest."[49]

Among the major issues theologians like Aulén have with satisfaction theory is Anselm's view of Christ as the "God-man" since Aulén believes that the work of the atonement is divine activity alone. Yet Anselm's Christology, similar to his theology, is not something incidental to his work in *Cur Deus Homo* but has been thoroughly

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[46] Sumner, "Why Anselm Still Matters," 29. Sumner (Ibid., 30) states that although the term "honor" "is for the most part foreign to the Bible, the thoughts behind it are not."

[47] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.15.

[48] Sumner, "Why Anselm Still Matters," 29.

[49] Ibid. Hunter Brown writes, "Anselm does not present a hierarchy in which mercy and forgiveness are subservient to cold justice, but a constellation of relationships in which mercy, grace, forgiveness, repentance, prayer, justice, punishment, satisfaction, compensation, restitution, divine omnipotence and human autonomy all function in consideration of each other." Hunter Brown, "*Anselm's* Cur Deus Homo *Revisited*," *Église et Théologie* 25, (1994): 196.

considered in a previous letter to Pope Urban II titled, *On the Incarnation of the Word*. Similar to *Cur Deus Homo*, this earlier treatise is written to offer clarity to an unfinished letter he previously wrote that was in circulation, apparently without his permission, which defended the church against the error of "a certain cleric in France." This cleric argued that if the members of the Trinity are in fact "one" then God the Father and the Holy Spirit in addition to the Son had to be incarnate. If this is untrue, his detractor contends, and only the Son was incarnate, then Christianity professes belief not in one God but three. Since the cleric subsequently recanted this position the letter, only partially written, was not published by Anselm. But this error remained unchallenged by the church, and at the behest of some of his "brothers" he decided to complete the treatise to resolve this controversy. Anselm begins his argument by first considering the relationship of the Father and the Son (the Holy Spirit is omitted from the discussion for the sake of clarity) who are considered in Church doctrine to be two persons sharing the designation, "God." When the church refers to the Father and the Son as God they are speaking therefore of one being (or essence) with the proper names "Father" and "Son" used to distinguish them. Anselm notes that the Father is not the Son nor is the Son the Father as in human relationships when a person can be both father and son concurrently. The Father is God and the Son is God and they are not two separate beings like angels or souls consequently Anselm contends that there is only "one God as to substance, although the Father and the Son are two [persons] rather than one."[50] Only God the Son as a distinct person of the Trinity, then, was incarnate in "co-operation" with the Father and Holy Spirit in whose essence alone he shares. If there is no distinction in the

[50] Anselm of Canterbury. "On the Incarnation of the Word," in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, Oxford World's Classics, eds. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2.

members of the Trinity (or tri-unity), which his opponent suggests, then there is no purpose in employing this term subsequently he is forced to either affirm that either the Father alone is God and the Son and Spirit are not divine or that there are three separate gods. Anselm argues that the logic of the cleric's theology necessarily supports the latter.

In his *On the Incarnation of the Word*, Anselm argues that if God is the "supreme good," which his detractor would concede, and there is more than one supreme good, then this supreme good, is not actually "supreme." Further, any good less than the supreme good is not God because the supreme good, by definition, is without equal. This is analogous to the supreme essence of God which cannot be duplicated nor superseded by other beings. The Father and the Son share this supreme essence and are not two essences or substances but one and yet distinct persons. The Son, in his person, became human and not the Father yet he did not resign his divine nature at the Incarnation. If the Holy Spirit for instance became flesh in addition to the Son then there would be two identical Sons of the Father which is contradictory; therefore only one substance, the Son, became incarnate. Additionally, the Father could not have been the son of the Virgin because the Virgin is the daughter of the Father. No other member of the Godhead therefore could fittingly become incarnate except the Son. Furthermore, it is appropriate that the Son pleads with the Father on behalf of humanity rather than the Father pleading to Himself. Moreover, Anselm writes, "of the three divine persons [none] more appropriately 'emptied his very self, taking the form of a slave' [Phil 2:7] in order to war against the devil and intercede for human beings, who had by robbery presumed falsely to be like God, than the Son."[51] Although the Son has both divine and human natures, they are incapable of being separated. For when one speaks of the Son they cannot speak

[51] Anselm, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, 2.

of his humanity apart from his divinity nor his divinity apart from his humanity. Citing John 1:14, Anselm states that the "'Word became flesh'" which affirms that the divine nature (the Word) merged with human nature (the flesh) to become one in Jesus Christ. Anselm uses an analogy of the river Nile which is comprised of its source, the river, and the delta to which it flows to describe the triune relationship between the Father, Son, and Spirit. If any one of these three components were eliminated the Nile would be non-existent or if the parts are separated this would create three Niles. In reference to the Trinity therefore "neither the divine substance can lose singularity, nor the divine relations plurality, when God is generated from God, or God proceeds from God, one thing in God is thus three, and three things are one, and yet three things are not predicated of one another."[52] Anselm's Christology is therefore "Chalcedon Christology"[53] since it upholds the view of the two-natures of Christ, both God and human, and their Trinitarian theology since they, together with the Holy Spirit, are three persons with one nature. Anselm concludes his treatise by commending the work of patristic theologians such Augustine's *On the Trinity* to his audience which despite its coherency of this difficult concept the great doctor ultimately acknowledges its incomprehensibility.

1.1.1.1.3. Satisfaction Theory on the Problem of Sin

Having first articulated his theology and Christology, Anselm's anthropology is then detailed which, contrary to the claims of his critics, is essentially positive since God "created [humanity] righteous so that he might be blessedly happy."[54] Anselm explains,

[52] Anselm, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, 16.
[53] Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, *Anselm*, (New York: *Oxford University Press*, 2009), 229.
[54] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, II.1.

> It ought not to be doubted that the nature of rational beings was created by God righteous in order that, through rejoicing in him, it might be blessedly happy. For the reason why it is rational is in order that it may distinguish between right and wrong, and between the greater good and the lesser good. Otherwise it was created rational to no purpose…But it is not fitting that God should have given such an important power to no purpose. It is a certainty, therefore, that rational nature was created to the end that it should love and choose, above all, the highest good, and that it should do this, not because of something else, but because of the highest good itself…For so long, then, as it performs righteous acts, loving and choosing the highest good—the purpose for which it was created—it will be miserable, because it will be in need against its will, not having what it yearns for. This is an extreme absurdity. Hence rational nature was created righteous to the end that it might be made happy by rejoicing in the highest good, that is, in God. Man, being rational by nature, was created righteous to the end that, through rejoicing in God, he might be blessedly happy.[55]

Humanity was originally created to be God's representative on earth, and exercise their will in accordance with God's will. The will of God involves their "conformity to [God's] character"[56] marked by qualities such as love, justice and mercy. These communicable attributes, given to humanity at the time of creation, are to be reflected in the world through acts of mercy, maintaining order, distributing justice, and administering dominion (stewardship) over creation. Through exercising these divine traits, humanity would find happiness and fellowship with God.

Though Anselm begins with a positive anthropology, the human condition in *Cur Deus Homo* subsequent to the fall is construed as negative, since humanity wilfully broke fellowship with God. This shift begins to make his case for why God became man. Humanity's rejection of the purpose for which they have been created by failing to exercise God's will constitutes "sin" for Anselm. This began with "our first parents," Adam and Eve, whose disobedience Anselm explicates in further detail in his treatise, *On*

[55] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, II.1.
[56] John D. Hannah, "Anselm on the Doctrine of Atonement," *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1978): 334.

the Virgin Conception and Original Sin.[57] Anselm's view on original sin subsumes the primary tents of the doctrine of the Church fathers on this subject. He writes that although humanity's "first parents were created just and entirely sinless,"[58] Adam and Eve's refusal to submit their will to God created a division between them and their Creator. Anselm further states,

> In the Garden, man was created without sin, as if he were placed there as God's deputy, in a position between God and the devil, the intention being that he might overcome the devil by no consenting when the devil recommended sin by means of persuasion…although man was easily capable of doing this, he allowed himself to be conquered by persuasion alone, not under forcible compulsion. He did this in accordance with the will of the devil and contrary to the will and honour of God…now that he is weak and mortal, being himself responsible for having made himself like this, man needs to conquer the devil through the difficulty of death, and in so doing to sin in no way. He cannot do this, so long as he is conceived by the wound of primal sin, and so long as he is born in sin.[59]

After the fall, Anselm's anthropology changes from positive to negative since he describes humanity moving from an original state of blessedness to define "the whole of humanity [as] rotten and, as it were, in a ferment with sin."[60] Similar to patristic theology, Anselm contends that "man who was conquered" by the devil through a volitional act of disobedience, and are now hopelessly immersed in a state of sin. Adam and Eve sinned because they made a willful choice to refuse exercising the qualities of God in the world. Rather than obeying God, they listened to the devil who enticed them to rebel. Yet the subjection of the will is what humanity *owes* God. Consequently, "to sin is nothing other than not to give to God what is owed to him," namely, the subjection of their will.[61]

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[57] This treatise an addendum to *Cur Deus Homo*, according to Anselm, to answer inquiries such as "how God assumed sinless human nature from the sinful mass of humanity." Anselm of Canterbury, "*On the Virgin Conception and Original Sin*," in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, Oxford World's Classics, eds. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), Preface.

[58] Anselm, "On the Virgin Conception and Original Sin," 1.

[59] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.22.

[60] Ibid., I.23.

[61] Ibid., I.11.

Original (natural) sin, of which all humanity is guilty for Anselm is to be distinguished from "personal" (actual) sin which is "the sin that each man commits after he has become a person…because it comes about through a fault in the person."[62] Personal sin is equally an affront to God's honor, or order, since it perpetuates the disordering of the universe. Humanity when it acts contrary to God's will, in light of God's gift of reason, is sin according to Anselm. Actual sin is pervasive since every person has exercised their free will against God in addition to their culpability for the sin in to which they have been born.[63] Humanity therefore is "doubly guilty" due to original sin in addition to subsequent personal sins committed volitionally. Humanity can blame no one for their sin because they willfully disobeyed God, and justifiably incur its consequence which is punishment leading to death. Dániel Deme in his study on Anselm's Christology writes, "If sin was something to which one is drawn by an external force against one's own will, if it was executed merely through us and not by us, then God would have no reason to punish us."[64] Since Anselm has eliminated the role of the devil, humanity can blame no one for their sin, and stands in a state of guilt before God.

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[62] Anselm, "On the Virgin Conception and Original Sin," 1.

[63] The question as to how infants, or the unborn, who have yet to exercise their will based on rational thought naturally emerges from this discourse. Regarding the question of the culpability of infants in reference to original sin, Dániel Deme writes, "Anselm makes it clear right from the outset that original sin is also injustice, a personal injustice [*DCV*, 3] that it is not something for which one could blame only Adam. We are personally responsible for it and we are justly condemned for being conceived and born in injustice…Anselm [though] makes a strong effort to show that there is a real difference between the sin of infants and the sin of Adam, or those who commit actual sins [*DCV*, 23], but the final verdict is unambiguous. The newborn child, in the moment when it starts to be rational, has the inclination to go against the will of God and is guilty of sin [*DCV*, 27]. This is a cruel verdict, but it is not the verdict of God; rather, it is that of sin. The condemnation of infants does not point to the heartless injustice of an angry god, but to the fact 'how grave sin is.' Anselm is rightly uncompromising in this question, otherwise his constant stress on the heavy weight and horror of sin would seem only as a superficial exaggeration." Dániel Deme, *The Christology of Anselm of Canterbury* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 53-54. (*DCV* is Anselm's treatise "On the Virgin Conception and Original Sin" [*De conceptu virginali et de originali peccato*].)

[64] Deme, *The Christology of Anselm of Canterbury*, 51. This is one further reason why it was important for Anselm to eliminate the role of the devil since he, the devil, cannot be blamed for sin, and accordingly punished for humanity's volitional acts of sin. Humanity, then, is entirely culpable for sin both "original" and "personal."

This state is depraved because it constructs a barrier between God and humanity, which offers them no protection against the devil, and they are unable to exercise God's qualities, that alienate them from God's kingdom. The human situation also effects the status of the universal since it has been disordered by human sin, which offends God' honor. Sin for Anselm is therefore taken seriously because "there is nothing in the universal order more intolerable than that a creature should take away from the Creator the honour due to him, and not repay what he takes away."[65]

Since the subjection of the will is what humanity *owes* God, and "to sin is nothing other than not to give to God what is owed to him," sin therefore creates a "debt," according to Anselm. This debt has been accruing since humanity has not surrendered their will to God which is their principal obligation. Deme writes,

> When the creature [human or angel] does not render to the Creator what it owes him, it does not only become a debtor, but by producing a debt it dishonours its Lord. In this particular sense, it is not possible to be God's debtor without committing a sin against him at the same time; a turning away from him cannot be a short excurses with a planned return. Man and angel have the power and will to avoid becoming a debtor, but they do not have the power and will to avoid remaining a debtor once they become that; they are capable of maintaining, but they are incapable of restoring (Rom. 7:18-20). This is what makes a debtor a sinner: bringing oneself willingly to a situation in which one creates debts without having the capacity to discharge them. Borrowing then becomes robbery (*furtum*); debt becomes sin.[66]

The sin-debt of humanity is both and "intolerable and ultimately unjust" to God, and a grave affront to the order of the universe that cannot continue without recompense. Although Anselm uses the principles of *remoto Christo* to support his view of sin as

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[65] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.13.

[66] Deme, *The Christology of Anselm of Canterbury*, 52. Deme's above statement, "it is not possible to be God's debtor without committing a sin against him at the same time; a turning away from him cannot be a short excurses with a planned return," is significance since is suggests that Anselm situates sin under the category of ontology. Sin which creates a "debt" requires a "payment" of "hard currency" (Anderson, *Sin: A History*, [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009], 8.) which is distinct from the hamartiology of other atonement theorists.

"debt," his hamartiology is nonetheless consistent with the biblical narrative since this concept appears in Jesus' parables.[67] "Sinning," defined as "not rendering to God what one ought. What ought to be…rendered is obedience to the will of God," is further explained by Anselm,

> Someone who does not render to God this honour due to him is taking away from God what is his, and dishonouring God, and this is what it is to sin. As long as he does not repay what he has taken away, he remains in a state of guilt. And it is not sufficient merely to repay what has been taken away: rather, he ought to pay back more than he took, in proportion to the insult which he has inflicted…everyone who sins is under an obligation to repay to God the honour which he has violently taken from him, and this is the satisfaction which every sinner is obliged to give to God.[68]

Anselm emphasizes that there is "no greater injustice" that can be committed than for God's creatures to take away his honor by not repaying this debt.[69] The consequence of unpaid debt, in accordance with the juridical principles that govern the universe, Anselm argues, is punishment since "it is not fitting for God to allow anything in his kingdom to slip by unregulated."[70] God's retributive justice is the fitting consequence of human sin, and God's only possible recourse, apart from being repaid, because his honor must be restored. Sin as debt is an indispensable concept in Anselm's satisfaction theory, and

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[67] Jesus' parable of the servant's financial accountability to the king in Matt. 6:23-35 is just one instance in which the notion of sin as debt emerges in the New Testament. Brown (*Anselm on atonement*, 292) further notes that this definition of sin appears in the Lord's Prayer which is central to Christianity. For modern versions that speak of "forgiveness us our sins" or "forgive us our trespasses" stem from the more literal "forgive us our debts" (King James Version [KJV]), or, more literal still, "forgive us what is owed. Exactly the same word is used in the Latin Bible as Anselm uses here. So Anselm is picking up on notions that run deep within the New Testament itself.

[68] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.11.

[69] Anselm (Ibid., I.15) further explains, "When a rational being does not wish for what is right, he dishonours God, with regard to himself, since he is not willingly subordinating himself to God's governance, and is disturbing, as far as he is able, the order and beauty of the universe." Concerning God's honor, from Anselm, Hannah ("Anselm on the Doctrine of Atonement," 334 [fn. 10]) writes, "This dishonoring of God is not the negating to any degree of God's being; it is not a directly personal attack, but it is the taking lightly of his established order. God cannot be diminished to any degree, but His creation which reflects His being can be marred. This God cannot permit."

[70] Ibid., I.12.

central to his atonement theology, since it is not construed as something immaterial which God can ignore but is substantive that requires physical repayment.

After defining sin, and articulating its consequences, Anselm then considers the statement, "How heavy the weight of sin is."[71] Even "trivial sin is infinitely serious"[72] for Anselm since it is an affront to God's honor, or a disruption of the order of the universe. He writes, "This is how seriously we sin, whenever we knowingly do anything, however small, contrary to the will of God. For we are always in his sight, and it is always the teaching he gives us that we should not sin."[73] Southern on the gravity of sin in *Cur Deus Homo* writes,

> That the slightest sin—even a single glance of the eye against the will of God—should (negatively) be greater than the whole positive value of the universe apart from God [Anselm writes]. This is the necessary logical foundation for his argument that *any* movement of the disobedient will, however slight, disturbs the perfect order of God's Creation in a way that nothing within the system can correct.[74]

Since God cannot allow the universe to continue in its current state, either sin must be punished or recompense (satisfaction) given, to pay this debt to God. Anselm, though, further stipulates that "recompense should be proportional to the size of the sin."[75] In an important exchange with Boso, Anselm asks him,

> Tell me then: what payment will you give God in recompense for your sin? [Boso:] Penitence, a contrite and humbled heart, fasting and many kinds of bodily labour, the showing of pity through giving and forgiveness, and obedience. [Anselm:] "What is it that you are giving to God by all these means? [Boso:] Am I not honouring God? For out of fear and love of him I am rejecting temporal happiness in heartfelt contrition; in fasting and laboring I am trampling underfoot the pleasures and ease of this life; in giving and forgiveness I am exercising generosity; and in obedience I am making myself subject to him. [Anselm:] When

[71] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.21.
[72] Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 230.
[73] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.21.
[74] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* 218. (Southern's emphasis)
[75] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.20.

> you are rendering to God something which you owe him, even if you have not sinned, you ought not to reckon this to be recompense for what you owe him for sin. For you owe to God all the things to which you refer.[76]

Boso's currency for paying his debt is in the forms of penance, contrition, humility, fasting, bodily labors, showing pity, offering forgiveness, and being obedient. Yet this form of currency is invalid in God's economy, Anselm explains, since, "You ought likewise to understand that the things you are giving are not your property by the property of him whose bondslave you are."[77] If humanity believes that they would become obedient to God's will, which is to renounce sin, and align their intellect, will, and emotions with God's, this would not suffice. Believing that one can pay their debt through these means is a clear indication, according to Anselm, that they "have not yet considered how heavy the weight of sin is."[78] They have misconstrued the irreparable damage done by their actions in addition to the sin they inherited from their first parents. For Anselm, no human being, then, can "of himself, make this recompense."[79] The human predicament is portrayed as particularly dire, in *Cur Deus Homo* since humanity is in a state of sin, alienated from God, with no means to offer recompense for their debt.

In *Cur Deus Homo,* Boso is in part representative of humanity who must give God satisfaction (*satisfactio*) or "the doing of what is required."[80] "Making up for such dishonouring involves not only paying what was originally owed, that is, conforming one's will to that of God, but also something more, a restoring of honour where there has

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[76] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.20.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., I.21.
[79] Ibid., I.20.
[80] Sumner, "Why Anselm Still Matters," 31. In *Cur Deus Homo*, satisfaction is synonymous with the term "recompense" and recompense with "compensation" and "atonement." Brown, "Anselm on atonement," 282. This supplemental terminology is used to clarify the obscurity of the term "satisfaction" used in Anselm's medieval context. Satisfaction is also synonymic with "recompense," which means "making up enough (*satis*)." Brown, 295.

been insult. Satisfaction for sin must include [then] both elements (CDH I.11)."[81] The role of the devil eliminated earlier in Anselm's treatise is critical at this juncture since

> [humanity now] owes only to God a service which he cannot pay, the logical problem of Redemption seems insuperable. Where there is only a debtor who cannot pay, and a creditor who cannot be paid, common sense and logic equally suggests that the creditor must for ever forgo his payment. He may punish or he may forgive, but he cannot be paid; and there is an air of subterfuge and unreality in any attempt to show that he can.[82]

By the conclusion of Book 1, Anselm has managed to define, unambiguously, the human predicament which, due to both inherited and volitional sin, owes a debt to God alone to which they have no resources pay. Further, that reconciliation with God cannot occur unless payment is satisfied. Anselm then asks Boso after enlightening him on his situation, "What, then, will become of you? How will you be saved?"[83]

1.1.1.1.4. Satisfaction Theory on the Forgiveness of Sin

After defining the human predicament, Anselm then considers how God can be forgiven sin. Anselm deliberates on the possibility of "Whether it is fitting for God to forgive sin out of mercy alone, without any restitution of what is owed to him."[84] Yet if God would simply forgive sin by mercy alone, justice would not be served but abrogated. That is, God's characteristic of justice would be rendered subordinate to his mercy which is not a possibility for Anselm, since God exercises his attributes with perfection. Southern adds that God's forgiveness of sin through mercy alone, would reveal "a deficiency either of justice—in the sense of failing to exhibit the true nature of God—or

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[81] G. R. Evans, *Anselm* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow Publishing, 1989), 76.

[82] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape*, 209-210. Southern (Ibid., 210) notes that Anselm's by removing the role of the devil from the drama of redemption "had left Man and God facing each other with no go-between to bridge the gap."

[83] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.20.

[84] Ibid., I.12.

of power in the work of God."[85] Additionally, if God does decide to act with justice, it will appear that he is unmerciful, and that he is administering his attributes capriciously. Further, Anselm writes, "if a sin is forgiven without punishment: the position of the sinner and non-sinner before God will be similar—and this does not befit God."[86] God's forgiveness of sin in this way would mistakenly

> place the disobedient will on the same level as the obedient one. Indeed…it would make the disobedient will God-like than the obedient one, for the nature of disobedience (like God in this respect) is being subject to no law. If the disobedient will were to be blessed, sinners would be, as Satan promised Eve, truly God-like…such forgiveness would do nothing to correct the disturbance of the order and beauty of the universe caused by sin. On the contrary, by condoning disorder, it would lead to an ever-widening area of anarchy in God's kingdom, and destroy the beauty of the universe.[87]

Sin therefore must not only be punished but expiated if the universe is to be reordered. This will involve complete satisfaction for the debt that humanity owes God. Since God is perfect, there must be a solution in which the humanity's debt can be forgiven without God compromising his attributes of mercy and justice.

For Anselm, logic further dictates that since the human race dishonored God, it is appropriate that "it should be a human being who should pay…for the guilt of humanity."[88] Yet, this is impossible because of natural and actual sin of which all people are guilty. There must exist, then, a person who is without sin, and can satisfy the offense against God's honor. This person therefore must be "someone who would be greater than everything that exists apart from God"[89] since all are indebted to God. Anselm continues,

> Now, there is nothing superior to all that exists which is not God—except God. But the obligation rests with man, and no one else, to make payment referred to.

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[85] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape*, 212.
[86] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.12.
[87] Southern *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape*, 212.
[88] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, II.8.
[89] Ibid., II.6.

> Otherwise mankind is not making recompense…[Since] no one can pay except God, and no one ought to pay except man: it is necessary that a God-Man should pay it.[90]

This "God-Man" (*Deus-Homo*), Anselm concludes, is Jesus Christ, who in his humanity was void of original sin, and God, who alone can offer recompense proportional to this offense. Only Christ who is God "has the goodness and justice which could be offered to right his offended goodness and justice."[91] Through deductive reasoning, Anselm arrives at the solution to the focus question of his treatise, *Cur Deus Homo*.[92] Only in the God-man, Jesus Christ, "could the circle be squared" and "the problem solved."[93]

The solution, though, is not just an issue of Christology, that is having the right "person," but involves soteriology because it is the "work" of the God-man, or the cross,

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[90] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.12. Visser and Williams in their work on Anselm further clarify that "only a God-man as defined by the Council of Chalcedon can make the recompense that God cannot fail to offer." They write, "If…these two natures, as wholes, are said to be somehow conjoined to a limited extent whereby man and God are distinct from one another and not one and the same, it is impossible that both should bring about what it is necessary should happen. For God will not do it because it will not be his obligation to do it, and a man will not do it because he will not be able to. In order, therefore, that a God-Man should bring about what is necessary, it is essential that the same one person who will make the recompense should be perfect God and perfect man. For he cannot do this if he is not true God, and he has no obligation to do so if he is not a true man. Given, therefore, that it is necessary for a God-Man to be found in whom the wholeness of both natures is kept intact, it is no less necessary for these two natures to combine, as wholes, in one person, in the same way as the body and the rational soul coalesce into one human being. For otherwise it cannot come about that one and the same person may be perfect God and perfect man." Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 229.

[91] Sumner, "Why Anselm Still Matters," 30.

[92] This also satisfies his primary question that initiates his treatise, "By what logic or necessity did God become man, and by his death, as we believe and profess, restore life to the world, when he could have done this through the agency of some other person, angelic or human, or simply by willing it?" (*Cur Deus Homo*, 1.1) With this last phase in place, Southern (*Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape*, 206) offers the following synopsis of *Cur Deus Homo* structured under three general categories: "The problem," "The necessity of a solution," and "The solution." The "problem" for Anselm is that humanity was originally created for eternal blessedness which includes the total submission of their will to God which they have renounced. Their original state cannot be regained however because they cannot adequately atone for their disobedience. This results in the disordering of God's ordered universe which God created as *good*. The "necessity" of a solution for the re-ordering of God's universe, despite humanity's refusal to obey God, cannot be frustrated and accordingly a plan to reconcile this anomaly must necessarily exist. The "solution" to restore eternal blessedness must, as prime perpetrator, come from among humanity because it's their offense. However they are incapable of making restitution proportional to their transgression. This debt, according to Anselm, only God can repay. The God-Man, Jesus Christ, is the logical and necessary outcome of combing human indebtedness and God's repayment.

[93] Sumner, "Why Anselm Still Matters," 30.

which makes the recompense that procures salvation. "The offering made by Christ on the Cross," according to Anselm is significant, since it "is of greater weight than all the sins of the world put together."[94] The cross holds this value since "killing the God-man is incomparably more serious than other sins, because it is a sin directly against the person of God."[95] Jesus Christ assumes humanity's punishment on the cross and satisfies their debt which restores God's order. "At the very heart of Anselm's theology," then, "is the claim that this satisfaction represents an exchange, Jesus in our place, Jesus for us [*pro nobis*]."[96] "That is after all why Anselm explains why it had to be a God-man," Sumner notes, because "the person of Jesus, God and man, his act, its exchange, the cost [is what] lies at the heart of what Anselm calls 'satisfaction.'"[97] The cross for Anselm, contrary to the conception of his critics, does not primarily satisfy "God's honor," or placate "God's wrath," but is necessary for restoring the order and beauty of the universe. The cross according to Anselm is indicative of God's perfect justice since God could not merely forgive out of mercy alone because "such forgiveness would do nothing to correct the disturbance of the order and beauty of the universe caused by sin. On the contrary, by condoning disorder, it would lead to an ever-widening area of anarchy in God's kingdom, and destroy the beauty of the universe."[98]

There is an issue involving the will that this solution must yet redress. Important for Anselm, then, is to demonstrate that the death of the Son was not coerced by the Father. This would be a rescinding of the will of Christ which would be a direct conflict with the universal order. Anselm addresses this question in the closing chapters of *Cur*

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[94] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape,* 218.
[95] Visser and Williams, *Anselm,* 230.
[96] Sumner, "Why Anselm Still Matters," 30.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape,* 212.

Deus Homo when probing the issue of, "How the life of Christ is recompense paid to God for sins of mankind; and how Christ was obliged, and was not obliged, to suffer."[99]

Anselm writes,

> No member of the human race except Christ ever gave to God, by dying, anything which that person was not at some time going to lose as a matter of necessity. Nor did anyone ever pay a debt to God which he did not owe. But Christ of his own accord gave to his Father what he was never going to lose as a matter of necessity, and he paid, on behalf of sinners, a debt which he did not owe…He was in no way needy on his own account, or subject to compulsion from others, to whom he owed nothing, unless it was punishment that he owed them. Nevertheless, he gave his life, so precious; no, his very self; he gave his person—think of it—in all its greatness, in an act of his own, supremely great, volition.[100]

In answering "unbelievers" who "argue that it cannot have been reasonable or just in God to deliver up to death his own Son whom he loved, and who was when he became man, the most just of all men (CDH I.8)," Evans notes that difficult questions such as these "disappear…if we realize that the Son was not forced…The Son willed to die."[101]

Christ's selfless act of obedience does what Adam and Eve failed to do which is conforming his will to God's. Evans writes,

> Every rational creature ought as a fundamental obligation of its nature to hold steadily to justice and truth in deed and word. When he became man, the Son owed that obedience to God. When he was persecuted and crucified, it was a result of his persevering in this obedience which is simply living rightly. No compulsion to die can have come from God in this. God created all rational beings to be happy in the enjoyment of God, and would never make such a creature unhappy through no fault of his own. To meet death against one's will is unhappiness. So God cannot have compelled Christ to do that. We must conclude that Christ willingly underwent death, not obeying any command to give up his life, but going steadily on in justice and willingly taking the consequences (CDH I.9).[102]

On the volitional sacrifice of Christ, Deme notes the following:

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[99] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, II.18.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Evans, *Anselm*, 75.
[102] Ibid.

> What we read in *Cur deus homo* is that there was no compelling whatsoever from the part of the Father, no attempt to solve the situation at the expense of innocent blood. He does not kill an innocent man instead of a fallen creature [*CDH* I.8], he does not force anyone to pay someone else's debt who never owed anything [*CDH* I.18]. It was solely a decision on the part of the free and sovereign will of the Son that he decided to be obedient unto death. The only way the Father can be said to will the death of Jesus Christ is indirect—that is, by not willing to allow the human race to be lost [*CDH* 1.9]. Anselm puts it absolutely clearly that the honour that Christ offers to the Father is offered to the whole Trinity and divinity—that is, to himself too. He offers his innocent humanity to his perfect divinity. Therefore it would be a nonsense to think that the one who honours is at the same time punished, or who honours himself also punishes himself in the same event. It is hard to imagine the Anselm would confuse so badly what God accomplished so well, but I believe that a reasonably careful reading of the *Cur deus homo* could alone annul any suspicion of such error.[103]

Through the cross, Jesus Christ restored not only the honor of God but his own honor since it "belongs to the whole Trinity."[104] "It follows," then, according to Anselm, "that because Christ himself is God, the Son of God, the offering he made of himself was to his own honour as well as to the Father and the Holy Spirit; that is, he offered up his humanity to his divinity, the one selfsame divinity which belongs to the three persons."[105]

The cross had extensive implications since in addition to restoring the honor of the Trinity, satisfies the punishment due sin, reconciles humanity to God, saves them from eternal death, liberates them from captivity to the devil, and repatriates them into the kingdom of God from which they were alienated. Stated more succinctly, the cross "showed us how much [God] loved us," according to Anselm.[106] Further that God desires reconciliation, restoration, and fellowship with humanity, and is willing to bear humiliation, punishment, and death to achieve that end. George Sumner writes,

> Instead of rendering justice with a massive rod of iron upon humankind, whose deliberate rebellion against a loving God would merit such treatment, God took

[103] Deme, *Christology of Anselm*, 89-90.
[104] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, II.18.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., I.21.

> this burden, and this work, on himself, in to only way it could be also taken on effectively for humankind. Yes, Jesus suffered in our stead, but the heart of the divine solution is not punishment, it is the creativity of deflection and self-assumption and costly renewal, all of which went for Anselm by the name "satisfaction."[107]

The viability of Anselm's treatise therefore is contingent upon a "strong doctrine of the seriousness of sin."[108] A sufficient knowledge of sin is essential for comprehending the meaning of the cross, and why God had to become man. Further, the qualities of God such as justice and mercy are unintelligible apart from understanding the significance of Christ's death. That is, to have a proper understanding of God's nature, one must comprehend the meaning of the cross, and to understand the cross, one must be attentive to consequences of sin. "God," for Anselm, then, is not the easily insulted lord who demands subservience," of a feudalistic society as his critics suggest, "but rather a creator who cannot without contradiction act with less than perfect justice, cannot put aside order and function of that which he has created."[109] Southern further notes, "Either of these defects would be contrary to the divine nature. Perfect power, perfect justice, perfect order, perfect beauty: the combination of these qualities in the highest degree constitutes the perfection of the universe in reflecting the divine nature."[110]

1.1.1.2. Penal Substitution Theory: John Calvin

One of the later derivatives of atonement theology's objective type is the penal substitution theory proffered by John Calvin which developed out of the satisfaction

[107] Sumner, "Why Anselm Still Matters," 31.
[108] Evans, *Anselm*, 69.
[109] Eileen C. Sweeney, *Anselm of Canterbury and the Desire for the Word* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 288.
[110] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape,* 218.

trajectory.[111] Language such as "satisfaction" appears in his theology of the cross and, like Anselm, emphasizes the necessity of Christ's divine and human nature, and further that redemption was the primary purpose of the incarnation. Calvin suggest that "The Mediator must be true God and true man," and, accordingly, adheres to a "Chalcedon Christology" that the redeemer, Jesus Christ, must be true God and true man.[112] Topics like the obedience of Christ to the will of God, which, according to Anselm, honors God are revisited by Calvin who writes,

> Our reconciliation with God was this: that man, who by his disobedience had become lost, should by way of remedy counter it with obedience, satisfy God's judgment, and pay the penalties for sin. Accordingly, our Lord came forth as true man and took the person and the name of Adam in order to take Adam's place in obeying the Father, to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God's righteous judgment, and, in the same flesh, pay the penalty the we had deserved. In short, since neither as God alone could he feel death, nor as man alone could he overcome it, he coupled human nature with divine that to atone for sin he might submit the weakness of the one to death; and that, wrestling with death by the power of the other nature, he might win victory for us.[113]

Calvin's imagery of "the Redeemer is naturally indebted to the soteriology inherited from St. Anselm," and likewise posited that "Divine justice required strict compensation for sin."[114]

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[111] Brown (*Anselm on atonement*, 296) further notes that, "Calvin can be seen as in some ways more truly medieval than Anselm. For, despite the accusation that is sometimes made that it is Anselm who sets the trend for medieval literary artistic obsession with the horrors of Christ's death, nowhere does Anselm dwell on such details or characterize them as a divinely imposed punishment." For an extended study on the correspondence between Anselm and Calvin regarding the subject of the atonement, reference, John R. Gerstner, "The Atonement and the Purpose of God," in *Atonement*, ed. Gabriel N. E. Fluhrer (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010), 49-66.

[112] Dillstone (*The Christian Understanding of Atonement*, 190) on this point writes "The ideas an language which Tertullian employed in dealing with an urgent practical problem in the life of the Church were to be taken up and used in a brilliantly logical and systematic way by Anselm in his attempt to provide a convincing demonstration that the Incarnation was not only a fact but also a necessary fact, the only possible means by which sinful man could have been saved."

[113] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1, *The Library of Christian Classics*, ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), II.XII.3.

[114] George H. Tavard, *The Starting Point of Calvin's Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 109.

David Brown in his study of *Cur Deus Homo* notes that, "what comes as a surprise to many is the extent to which his views were continuous with those of Anselm, even to the extent of frequently using language of 'satisfaction.'"[115] In addition to this borrowed term from Anselm, other vital concepts such as sin as "debt" are essential to Calvin's work. Regarding the parallels between Anselm's satisfaction theory and Calvin's penal substitution theory François Wendel in his study of Calvin's Christology and atonement theology writes,

> We have good right to regard [Calvin's atonement theology]…as a classic expression of the doctrine of satisfaction as it had been current ever since St. Anselm. Everything in it is exactly in balance and harmony. Man rendered himself guilty of sin and had offended God in such a manner that he was doomed to death. So the justice should be done, man had to expiate his sin. But man was incapable, by his own strength, of overcoming death: God alone could do so, but he had to take on human nature, so that it should indeed be man who expiated sin. It is by a kind of necessity of justice, then, that the Redeemer of mankind had to be both man and God.[116]

Similar to Anselm, when speaking of Christ, Christology is at the forefront of his thought making reference to him as the "God-man." Calvin, like Anselm, also was concerned to balance God's justice with God's mercy without bringing them into conflict. Robert Strimple writes,

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[115] Brown, *Anselm on atonement*, 296. J. I. Packer, a contemporary supporter of penal substitution theory underscores its similarities with satisfaction theory, making use of both the language and concepts found in *Cur Deus Homo*. He writes, "Since the time of the great Anselm, the Christian church has rejoiced to use this word *satisfaction* as a term expressing the real significance of the sacrifice of Christ. As Anselm expounded satisfaction, it was a matter of satisfying God's outraged honour, and that indeed is part of the truth. But when Luther came along, he broadened the idea of satisfaction to what he found in the Bible, and he made the right and true point that the satisfaction of Jesus Christ restores God's glory through Christ's enduring all penal retribution for sin. The satisfaction of Christ glorifies God the Father and wins salvation for the sinner by being a satisfaction of God's justice." J. I. Packer, "Sacrifice and Satisfaction," in *Celebrating the Saving Work of God: Collected Shorter Writings on Trinity, Christ, and the Holy Spirit*, ed. Jim Lyster (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2008), 127-128. For an additional study on the relationship between "Sacrifice" and "Satisfaction," reference, R. C. Sproul "Sacrifice and Satisfaction," in *Atonement*, ed. Gabriel N. E. Fluhrer (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010), 67-82.

[116] François Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 219.

> Calvin, with Anselm, rejected the possibility of 'free' forgiveness; that is, forgiveness by the mere good pleasure of God apart from payment for sin…Calvin, therefore, followed Anselm in adopting an essentially *juridical* conception of the atonement; and such Anselmian ideas as the payment of debt, rescue from a criminal sentence by substitute, and the atonement as the basis for a divine pronouncement of justification that is to be sharply distinguished for the subjective work of sanctification became cardinal tenets of the Protestant soteriology."[117]

Though both are based on juridical principles, and therefore are congruent at their core, Anselm's emphasis on commercial language such as "debt" and "recompense" and less emphasis on "Law" and "punishment" of Calvin which distinguishes the former from the latter. F. W. Dillstone on this distinction writes,

> The general atmosphere of Calvin's writings is also strikingly different in that whereas the key terms in Anselm (and the later scholastic theologians) were those belonging primarily to Roman civil law and to medieval feudal law—debt, liability, compensation, satisfaction, honour, price, payment, merit [commercial language]—in Calvin we find constant reference to punishment, death, the curse, wrath, substitution, surety, merit, imputation—[juridical] in other words to criminal law reinterpreted in the light of the Biblical teaching on the Law, sin and death. In Anselm man's life is indeed forfeit and his position is hopeless because he has failed to render God His due and is utterly devoid of resources to meet His obligations. In Calvin man is guilty before God's bar of judgment and his position is hopeless because the only appropriate punishment for his disobedience is to suffer the pangs of eternal death. In Anselm the merit of Christ's work is available to pay for the sinner's indebtedness: in Calvin the merit is available to save him from bearing punishment of his sins."[118]

Calvin's language is based on Anselmian principles. Strimple notes Calvin "followed Anselm in adopting an essentially judicial conception of the atonement; and such Anselmian ideas as the payment of debt, rescue from a criminal sentence by a substitute, and the atonement as the basis for a divine pronouncement of justification that is to be sharply distinguished from the subjective work of sanctification became cardinal tenets of

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[117] Robert B. Strimple, "St Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* and John Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement," in *Anselm: Aosta, Bec and Canterbury*, eds., D. E. Luscombe and G. R. Evans (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 354.

[118] Dillstone, *The Christian Understanding of Atonement* , 195.

the Protestant soteriology."[119] Calvin differs from Anselm however in his approach since it is grounded on the principle of Scripture alone, *sola scriptura*, rather than reason alone, *remoto Christo* ("removing Christ from view").[120] Although Anselm's work is congruent with Scripture, Calvin makes explicit citations from the Bible the cornerstone of his atonement theology.

Although the role that human sin plays in Anselm's motif is important, this theme takes center stage in Calvin's atonement theology. His view, which is also grounded on juridical principles, appropriates satisfaction theory differing only in the objective consequences of human sin. For Anselm, sin is an affront to God's honor, whereas for Calvin it provokes God's wrath. Both view the cross as the volitional work of Jesus Christ who is presented as the vicarious sacrificial offering on humanity's behalf for the forgiveness of sin which displays God's justice and mercy. Calvin's articulation of the problem of original sin which informs his perception of the cross is located in Book 2, Chapter 1, of his noted *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Similar to Anselm, Calvin suggests that the "revolt of Adam" brought a curse upon the human race and the ensuing degeneration of their "original excellence." Original sin defined by Calvin is "hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God's wrath."[121] Calvin draws extensively on Scripture turning to key passages such as Rom. 5:12, "sin came into the world through one man and death through

[119] Strimple, "St Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* and John Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement," 354.

[120] Regarding Calvin's use of Scripture to ground his doctrine of atonement, Dillstone (*The Christian Understanding of Atonement* , 195), "it was Calvin's constant ambition to present the evidence of the Scriptures in so comprehensive and so orderly a way that the doctrines of the faith would strengthen the conviction and purpose of God's elect and would stand as a bulwark against all false teaching and aggressive unbelief." Similar to Anselm, he draws upon the Church fathers (structure of Institutes) with a particular partiality toward Augustine. Yet, "his overwhelming concern," in his many commentaries and his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, "was to draw out from the Scriptures the authoritative doctrines which would instruct men in the true knowledge of God and thereby bring stability to the Church." (195)

[121] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.I.8.

sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned,"[122] to ground his doctrinal suppositions. From this text he concludes, "we are so vitiated and perverted in every part of our nature that by this great corruption we stand justly condemned and convicted before God."[123] Although Calvin subsumes the primary tenets of Original Sin discussed by Anselm, he goes further by noting that "our nature is not only empty of all good, but also full of all evil, an evil that cannot be idle."[124] Further, sin has a "double consequence,"

> [since] man becomes an object of horror to God and, conversely, man acquires a horror of God and hates him, for the divine righteousness fills him with fear. Thus the man enslaved to sin cannot take up any other attitude towards God but that of escape from him, be it only by denying him, which is also a manner of hiding from him.[125]

Although humanity does not seek reconciliation with their Creator, God nevertheless began a plan to restore the human race by giving them the Law to bring an awareness of sin, and consequently their estrangement from God, so that they would seek his pardon. Calvin understands the term "Law" to include not simply the Ten Commandments but the many supplemental requirements that comprise the Mosaic covenant which at its core is the sacrificial system. The complete observance of the Law yields perfect righteousness before God but because of their depravity, humanity is unable to keep God's Laws sufficiently therefore they "fall back into the mere curse."[126]

Having established first, systematically, his conception of humanity's depravity and inability to keep the Law which separates them from God, Calvin then discusses their

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[122] All biblical citations in this dissertation will be taken from the Revised Standard Version (RSV) unless noted otherwise.

[123] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.I.8. This citation underscores Calvin's anthropology of "total depravity" which is essential to his atonement theology.

[124] T. L. Parker, *Calvin: An Introduction to His Thought* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 51.

[125] Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Thought*, 216.

[126] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.VII.3.

only avenue of reconciliation which is through the cross of Jesus Christ. Since "no man could serve as intermediary to restore peace" between God and humanity, and because they are both vitiated by sin and "terrified at the site of God,"[127] God condescends to them in the person of "Immanuel" or "God with us." Jesus Christ, Immanuel, in his preexistence was "true God" but for him to become their "Redeemer" it was necessary that he join the human race. Calvin writes, "Our Lord came forth as true man and took the person and the name of Adam in order to take Adam's place in obeying the Father, to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God's righteous judgment, and, in the same flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved."[128] Similar to Anselm, Calvin builds his atonement theology upon the premise that humanity's debt "must be paid if [they are] to be redeemed before God. But no man, reduced to his own resources, could have discharged such a debt."[129] This quandary is similarly resolved by Christ's human nature suitably paying the debt humanity deserves and yet in his divine nature, that is void of Original Sin, makes him an acceptable sacrifice. God's justice and mercy are evident at the cross because sin is not simply overlooked and it is God in Christ who offers his life volitionally to save humanity.[130] Similar to Anselm, Calvin states that God's inimitable plan of redemption is "exactly in balance and harmony" since his attributes are non-contradictory, and therefore not administered arbitrarily.

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[127] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.XII.1.

[128] Ibid., II.XII.3.

[129] Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Thought*, 218.

[130] Calvin submits that his view of the cross is consonant with the New Testament text, particularly passages such as Gal. 1:4, "[Christ] gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." In his commentary on this letter from Paul he writes, "These words, who gave himself for our sins, were intended to convey to the Galatians a doctrine of vast importance; that no other satisfactions can lawfully be brought into comparison with that sacrifice of himself which Christ offered to the Father; that in Christ, therefore, and in him alone, atonement for sin, and perfect righteousness, must be sought; and that the manner in which we are redeemed by him ought to excite our highest admiration." John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, vol. XXI, *Calvin's Commentaries*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 26.

Calvin's atonement theology, like Anselm's is predicated on a strong exposition of human sin, and its consequences. This foundational anthropology is essential for explicating the meaning of the cross, and for disclosing why God became human. Further, God's attributes, such as justice, mercy, and love are obscured apart from comprehending the significance of the death of Christ. That is, to have a proper understanding of God's nature, one must comprehend the meaning of the cross, and to understand the cross' significance, one must have an accurate conception of human sin and its consequences.[131]

1.1.2. Atonement Theology: The Subjective Type

1.1.2.1. Moral Influence Theory: Peter Abelard

Calvin's appropriation of Anselm is exceptional since *Cur Dues Homo* was critiqued by nearly all theologians subsequent to the publication of his treatise. This criticism began almost immediately by some of Anselm's medieval contemporaries like Bernard of Clairvaux who suggests that satisfaction theory focuses too narrowly on the cross to the neglect of other important aspects such as Jesus' ministry. Bernard believed, rather, that "every stage of [Christ's] life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and his sending of the Spirit were all for us and work together for our salvation."[132] The emphasis on the death of Jesus in Anselmian atonement theology, to the detriment of his

[131] In theological terms, then, proper theology, or one's conception of God, is based on a correct conception of Christology, and to have an adequate understanding of Christology a sufficient understanding of soteriology, or the meaning of the cross is necessary. Yet soteriology cannot be understood without an appropriate view of Christian anthropology, and to understand anthropology an accurate notion of sin, or hamartiology, is required.

[132] Anthony N. S. Lane, *Bernard of Clairvaux: Theologian of the Cross*, *Cistercian Studies Series: Number Two Hundred Forty-Eight* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), 141. Lane (Ibid., 190-196) notes, however, that it is debatable whether Bernard read *Cur Deus Homo*, since neither this treatise or Anselm's name are mentioned explicitly in his theology of the cross.

ministry and resurrection, has been a common criticism among its detractors since they believe this view renders these vital aspects superfluous. Perhaps most objectionable, though, is Anselm's portrayal of God as angry and vindictive which his critics believe to be contradictory to his preeminent quality, namely, that of love. This is the primary objection of the subjective view promoted by Peter Abelard, a colleague of Bernard and fellow critic of Anselm.

Abelard developed his moral influence theory as alternative view to both the existent classic view, later promoted in Aulén's Christus Victor motif, and Anselm's new theory. Similar to Anselm, Abelard recognized problems with the ransom motif which, in addition to attributing a mistaken status to Satan, portrays God as a high-stakes gambler and proposes peculiar analogies such as the cross "as a mousetrap baited with the blood of Christ."[133] Yet Abelard considered substitution theory equally troubling because, like the ransom model, it depicts God as an unjust merciless father. Abelard writes, "How very cruel and unjust it seems that someone should require the blood of an innocent person…or that in any way it might please him that an innocent person be slain, still less that God should have so accepted the death of his Son that through it he was reconciled to the whole world."[134] As an alternative, Abelard proposed "that Christ's death functioned primarily as an example of obedience to the will of God, or divine love, which inspires a

[133] Vincent Taylor, *The Cross of Christ*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1957), 72. In his study on redemption in Abelard's theology, specifically his view concerning ransom theory, Thomas Williams writes, "Abelard is not merely saying that it would be wicked for God to demand the blood of his innocent Son as the price for release of human captives. He is saying that the notion of a price for release of captives is *incoherent*. Human beings were not under the devil's power, but under God's power. And the notion that God demanded payment from himself, having arbitrarily set the price as the death of his Son, is absurd." Thomas Williams, "Sin, grace, and redemption," in *The Cambridge Companion to Abelard*, ed. Jeffery E. Brower and Kevin Guilfoy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 264.

[134] Peter Abelard, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 12, *The Fathers of the Church: Mediaeval Continuation*, trans. Steven R. Cartwright (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 117.

response in the human heart of love for God…that transforms the person."[135] The principles of Abelard's atonement theology is presented in Book Two of his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* which suggests that the cross is not a product of retributive justice but archetypical of God's love which moves humanity to repentance.[136]

Abelard's theory is classified as "subjective" according to Aulén's typology in contrast to Anselm's objective atonement because it "[consists] essentially in a change taking place in men rather than a changed attitude on the part of God."[137] Since this view is concerned mostly about a change in humanity, Aulén refers to this view as "humanistic doctrine."[138] According to Aulén, Abelard's theory, "as far as God is concerned" suggests that "no Atonement was needed…Man repents and amends his life, and God in turn responds by rewarding man's amendment with an increase of happiness."[139] Since the subjective view had a lesser impact on Christian theology in comparison to the objective type, moral influence theory receives comparatively limited attention in Aulén's work. Abelard's view, though, is consistent with Aulén's since they both deride satisfaction theory primarily because of its negative portrayal of God. Abelard's primary critique of the satisfaction model is Anselm's claim that the sacrificial death of Christ was the only logical answer to redeeming humanity believing, rather, "that God is under no compulsion to choose any particular means of redemption."[140] Far from extolling God's attribute of justice, the idea of redemption that requires the death of an innocent person

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[135] Steven R. Cartwright, "Introduction," in Peter Abelard, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 12, *The Fathers of the Church: Mediaeval Continuation*, trans. Steven R. Cartwright, (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 44.

[136] Abelard (Ibid., 118) writes, "[Our] redemption is that supreme love in us through the Passion of Christ, which not only frees us from slavery to sin, but gains for us the true liberty of the sons of God, so that we may complete all things by his love rather than by fear."

[137] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 2.

[138] Ibid., 133.

[139] Ibid., 135.

[140] Cartwright, "Introduction," 47.

should be perceived as an abrogation of justice according to Abelard. He writes in his commentary on Romans,

> How does the Apostle say that we are justified or reconciled to God through the death of his Son, who should have been all the more angry with man because men forsook him so much more in crucifying his Son, than in transgressing his first commandment in paradise with the taste of one apple?...Because if that sin of Adam was so great that it could not be atoned for except by the death of Christ, how shall that murder which was committed against Christ be atoned for?...Did the death of the innocent Son please God the Father so greatly through it he is reconciled to us, we who perpetrated this by sinning, on account of which the innocent Lord was murdered? Unless this became the greatest sin, could he forgive it much more easily? Unless evils were multiplied, could he do so great a good?[141]

God's attributes of justice and love inform Abelard's interpretation of those biblical texts from which he derives his atonement theology. Passages such as Rom. 3:26 are particularly important, "it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus." This verse exhibits the "supreme" love of God, according to Abelard, in addition to "the patience of God, who does not immediately punish the guilty and destroy sinners but waits long that they may return through penance and cease from sin, and thus they may obtain leniency."[142] The love of God finds no better expression than in Christ's suffering and death on the cross. This theme, he contends, is disseminated throughout the New Testament. Abelard writes,

> [our] redemption is that supreme love in us through the Passion of Christ, which not only frees us from slavery to sin, but gains for us the true liberty of the sons of God [Rom. 8:21], so that we may complete all things by his love rather than by fear. He has showed us great grace, than which a greater cannot be found, by his own word: "No one," he says, "has greater love than this: that he lays down his life for his friends" [John 15:13]. Concerning this love the same person says elsewhere, "I have come to send fire on the earth, and what do I desire except that it burn?" [Luke 12:49] He witnesses, therefore, that he has come to increase this true liberty of charity among men.[143]

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[141] Abelard, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 3.26, (116).
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid. (Abelard's emphasis)

Redemption then is God's love instilled in the lives of those whose hearts are moved by the cross from one guided by sin to one that is imitative of God's Son.

Abelard conscientiously avoids juridical language such as "justice" or "law" promoted in satisfaction theory in connection with the cross replacing it with terminology such as "charity" or "grace" which best characterizes God's nature.[144] He contends that the Pauline epistles, particularly Romans, supports his moral influence theory believing it is also to be a continuation of the work of patristic theologians like Augustine. Yet, differently, Abelard made the principle of exemplarism the focus of his atonement theology. The cross, according to Abelard,

> becomes merely the incentive which induces us to follow in the road that Jesus trod; it was by shewing us in his person and in his words the way in which men ought to live that the incarnate Lord freed us from the penalty of Adam's sin...Jesus [then] was not the Man of Sorrows carrying the burden of our guilt or the victim offered up to the Father as a recompense for our sins, so much as the divine Logos made manifest to the world, incarnate because he would reveal to mankind the path of righteousness.[145]

Different from the Old Testament conception, which emphasized the keeping of the Law that was external to humanity, Abelard believed that God requires an internal transformation of humanity following the Law written on the human heart so that that they are compelled to follow God by love rather than duty.

If the word "love" characterizes Abelard's view of the cross, the term "consent" defines his view of sin. His New Testament exegesis also informs his view of the human condition yet peculiar to his approach Abelard's study of redemption precedes his theory of sin which is an inversion of most systematic studies of atonement theology such as

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[144] M. T. Clanchy, *Abelard: A Medieval Life* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999), 285.

[145] J. G. Sikes, *Peter Abailard*, Reissued 1932 (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1965), 207-208.

Calvin's. Abelard subscribes to the notion of Original Sin which is outlined in the following interpretation of Rom. 5:19,

> Since, therefore, we say that men are begotten and born with original sin and also contract this same original sin from the first parent, it seems that this should refer more to the punishment of sin, for which, of course, they are held liable to punishment, than to the fault of the soul and the contempt for God. For the one who cannot yet use free choice nor yet has any exercise of reason…no transgression, no negligence should be imputed to him, nor any merit at all by which he might be worthy of reward or punishment, more than to those beasts, when they seem wither to do harm or to help something.[146]

Unlike many of his predecessors however, Abelard's view of original sin does not uphold the idea that sin is transmitted hereditarily from the parent to the child but occurs through each person's volitional act of the will. "Human beings," therefore, "are conceived and born in a state of sin in the sense that we are all subject to the punishment for the sin of our first parents."[147] Humanity, then, is not inherently guilty before God apart from their free choice to "consent to evil," which Abelard construes as "sin" which is demonstrative of their "contempt for God" by disdaining what they know to be the will of God. Those who lack the capability to reason, such as children for instance, are not considered by Abelard culpable in the sight of God. This view was contradictory to traditional doctrines of original sin. Yet Abelard "could not allow that God may be considered as attributing guilt to those who have actually intended no wrong" and, accordingly, "the conception of inherited sin was far from his thought."[148] Abelard's definition of sin as "contempt of God and consent to evil"[149] suggests that humanity is aware of the laws they are violating which is to say that they must be cognizant of God's

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[146] Abelard, *Commentary on Romans*, 5.19 (164). "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous." (Rom. 5:19)

[147] Thomas Williams, "Sin, grace, and redemption," 264.

[148] Sikes, *Peter Abailard*, 184.

[149] Peter Abelard, *Peter Abelard's Ethics*, trans. D. E. Luscombe (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1971), 57.

will in order to exercise contempt. Although humankind sins persistently, God is very patient giving them adequate time to repent so that their repentance is induced by God's love and longsuffering rather than from fear which cannot engender true contrition. Penance therefore is central to Abelard's soteriology

> [believing that it] must not be an annual or even a daily affair; [but] should take place immediately [when] we have committed a sin. And when we are truly penitent, we are sorry for all the misdeeds which we can recall to memory, for it is impossible to repent for a single misdeed to the exclusion of the others which we have committed, and for each we must be prepared to render due penance.[150]

The cross is transformative and because it compels humanity to repent and turn from their consent to evil. Out of gratitude, then, they desire to do God's will which is characterized by the attributes of his nature such as love, patience, and mercy.

1.1.3. Atonement Theology: The Dramatic Type

1.1.3.1. Christus Victor: Gustaf Aulén

In reaction primarily to Anselm's satisfaction theory, and to some extent Abelard's moral influence view, Aulén's Christus Victor motif is built upon the "classic" theology of the cross, which predates these later medieval constructs, and whose "central theme is the idea of the Atonement as a Divine conflict and victory; Christ—Christus Victor—fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the 'tyrants' under which mankind is in bondage and suffering, and in Him God reconciles the world to Himself."[151] Christus Victor departs from texts such as 2 Cor. 5:19, "in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself." This passage integrates soteriology with Christology

[150] Sikes, *Peter Abailard*, 194.

[151] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 4. Aulén in his historical survey does not identify "Christus Victor" as a the name of his motif but uses the term "classic" or the "dramatic" view to distinguish it from the two other typologies.

since it is "God Himself who in Christ has delivered mankind from the power of evil."[152] Christus Victor is firmly situated in Scripture and therefore compatible, Aulén contends, with ransom theory located in patristic theology. The ransom view of the atonement suggests that humanity was under Satan's control and God paid a ransom to secure their release. Important biblical texts that support this theory are Mark 10:45, "For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" and 1 Cor. 6:2, "you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." The blood of Christ was the currency God used to pay Satan in this cosmic transaction which liberated humanity from their imprisonment. Ransom theory prevailed until the medieval period when it was challenged on several grounds such as its suggestion that human sin creates a debt owed to Satan and not God. Further that humanity in this drama is construed as "passive observers, not participants in the history of salvation" and that Satan is blamed "for all the problems and sins of the world."[153] This view was largely abandoned in Christian theology, particularly in the west, and replaced by Anselm's satisfaction theory which became the predominate view. Aulén believes this shift to be mistaken, and attempts to recover the patristic theology of the cross which he believes to be representative of the New Testament view of the atonement. The primary distinction between the patristic or "classic" or Christus Victor motif is the latter's view of Christ who, through his death and resurrection, is the "victor" in his battle with Satan while the former model depicts the cross as the means of payment for humanity's release from captivity.[154]

[152] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, v.
[153] Park, *Triune Atonement*, 11.
[154] This view is indicative, more particularly, of ransom theory which is not exclusively representative of patristic thinking about the cross. For instance, Athanasius, similar to Aulén's motif,

Different from satisfaction's objective type and moral influence's subjective type, Christus Victor posits a "dramatic" view which suggests that "the work of Atonement or reconciliation as from first to last a work of God Himself."[155] The dramatic type "sets the Incarnation in direct connection with the Atonement, and proclaims that it is God Himself who in Christ has delivered mankind from the power of evil."[156] Although this model shares features with the objective dimension of the satisfaction model that posits "God [as] the object of Christ's atoning work,"[157] a clear distinction is made by Aulén from this theory particularly in that "God" reconciles the world to himself while for substitution theorists it is Christ as "man" who reconciles the world to God.[158] The difference between the two then concerns their Christology. The objective type highlights the humanity of Christ in the work of redemption while the dramatic type underscores the Christ's divinity. The later type, Aulén contends, is more compatible with New

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contends that "it is death that is the ultimate enemy, and so the conquering of death, by the very death of the Lord, is the 'primary cause' of the Incarnation." Citation from, John Behr, *The Nicene Faith, Part One: True God of True God,* vol. 2, *The Formation of Christian Theology* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 195. (Behr's paraphrase of Athanasius's view) For Athanasius, according to Behr, "'incarnation' does not simply refer to the birth…but rather refers to [Christ's] birth when seen from, and then described in, the perspective of the Cross." (Behr, Ibid., 185) "Death" therefore is the objective of the cross, Athanasius submits, and not particularly "Satan" as ransom theorists suggest.

[155] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 5. Aulén (Ibid., 136) distinguishes between atonement as "reconciliation" and atonement as "salvation" defined as a "change in the spiritual life." Aulén therefore further differentiates the three different views. Satisfaction theory suggests that atonement precedes salvation while moral influence theory reverses this by arguing that salvation is antecedent to atonement. The Christus Victor model however, borrowing from the early church and Martin Luther, posits that "Salvation is Atonement, and Atonement is Salvation." This is important for Aulén since the lattermost view removes humanity from the "drama" which makes atonement the work of God alone in accordance with 2 Cor. 5:19.

[156] Ibid., xxi. (From Hebert's "Translator's Preface.")

[157] Ibid., 2.

[158] Aulén (Ibid., 5) further explains this distinction by noting that the dramatic model is therefore "a *continuous* Divine work; while according to the other view, the act of Atonement has indeed its origin in God's will, but is, in its carrying-out, an offering made to God by Christ as man and on man's behalf, and may therefore be called a *discontinuous* Divine work." (Aulén's emphasis.) The dramatic type is in accordance with 2 Cor. 5:19 which informs Aulén's position and therefore comparatively more consistent with the New Testament's portrayal of the person and work of Christ.

Testament passages such as 2 Cor. 5:19 which reveal that the work of redemption is the work of God alone.

Although Aulén's book *Christus Victor* is a "historical study" of three main types of atonement theology, his partiality toward the classic motif, is unequivocal and therefore is credited with being a 20th Century champion of this view.[159] "The central idea of Christus Victor" Aulén notes, "is the view of God and the Kingdom of God as fighting against evil powers ravaging in mankind. In this drama Christ has the key role, and the title Christus Victor says the decisive word about the role."[160] To support his argument, Aulén begins with a study of the work of Irenaeus, dedicating an entire chapter to his analysis, whom he believes is representative of the classic position because he is "the first patristic writer to provide us with a clear and comprehensive doctrine of the Atonement and redemption."[161] Aulén is predisposed to Irenaeus' work since it unifies the incarnation with the atonement. He writes that in Irenaeus' atonement theology "the redemptive work is carried out through the Incarnation of Christ, the Obedience of His human life, His Death and Resurrection, and the coming of the Spirit. Thereby God who reconciles is also reconciled, and the Atonement is effected."[162] This summary is the

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[159] Pelikan (*Christus Victor*, xiii) notes that most critics of this work, along with many of its supporters "interpret the book as a plea for the 'classic idea,'" despite Aulén's contention that the goal of his book "has been throughout an historical, not an apologetic aim." Aulén believes that his work is only making explicit what is implicit in patristic theology that lacked a coherent treatise on atonement doctrine since Christology and Trinitarian theology was their primary concern.

[160] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, ix.

[161] Aulén (Ibid., 17) maintains that "of all the Fathers there is not one who is more thoroughly representative and typical, or who did more to fix the lines on which Christian thought was to move for centuries after his day." What Aulén finds most attractive to the work of Irenaeus is that he does not base his theology of the cross on philosophical speculation, which he finds problematic especially in the later work of Anselm, rather he "devoted himself altogether to the simple exposition of the central ideas of the Christian faith itself." Moreover, Irenaeus, and nearly all other patristic writers, treat this topic, according to Aulén, in an "incidental way" noting that their primary preoccupation with developing an apologetic for Christology and Trinitarian theology. For Irenaeus, the doctrine of atonement is a recurring theme in his work particularly in his seminal work *Against Heresies* which is frequently cited by Aulén.

[162] Ibid., v.

basis for the classic, and therefore Christus Victor model, since it is God in Christ who is incarnate for the purpose of rescinding sin and conquering death which gives "life" to humanity. The story of salvation for Irenaeus is summarized in the following citation:

> Man had been created by God that he might have life. If now, having lost life, and having been harmed by the serpent, he were not to return to life, but were to be wholly abandoned to death, then God would have been defeated, and the malice of the serpent would have overcome God's will. But since God is both invincible and magnanimous, He showed His magnanimity in correcting man, and in proving all men…but through the Second Man He bound the strong one, and spoiled his goods, and annihilated death, bringing life to man who had become subject to death. For Adam had become the devil's possession, and the devil held him under his power, by having wrongly practised deceit upon him, and by the offer of immortality made him subject to death. For by promising that they should be as gods, which did not lie in his power, he worked death in them. Wherefore he who had taken man captive was himself taken captive by God, and man who had been taken captive was set free from the bondage of condemnation.[163]

The "work of Christ," then "is first and foremost a victory over the powers which hold mankind in bondage: sin, death, and the devil."[164] This is the purpose of the incarnation and the atonement which, according to Aulén, is entirely the work of God.

Sin and death therefore are largely synonymous in classic atonement theology, since where there is "sin" there is always "death" which necessarily follows. The cross then offers both "salvation from the state of sin," defined as "a state of alienation from God,"[165] and "salvation from death" which is "a bestowal of life" with the term "life" understood as "fellowship with God."[166] Irenaeus' notion of "salvation as life" and the victory of Christ over sin and death are consequent of his exegetical work of the New

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[163] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III.18.7. (From Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 19-20.)

[164] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 20.

[165] "Sin," is further defined by Aulén as "that which breaks fellowship with God" or "more closely defined as unbelief." Gustaf Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 2nd English ed. Trans. Eric H. Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 231. Aulén's conception of sin is distinct from Irenaeus' who construes it primarily as "immaturity" and associates it less with "death" or under the auspices of the devil. Irenaeus, *The Scandal of the Incarnation: Irenaeus Against the Heresies*, ed. Hans Urs non Balthasar, trans. John Saward, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 67.

[166] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 25.

Testament. Since sin and death are synonymous and the devil is "lord" of both,[167] Christ's victory over the devil frees humanity from both because they fall under the devil's power. Aulén writes, "from the devil's dominion men cannot escape, except through the victory of Christ; and this victory is specially a triumph over the devil, for the devil is regarded as summing up in himself the power of evil, as he who leads men into sin and has the power of death."[168] Defeat the devil, according to Irenaeus and Aulén, and both sin and death will be conquered, and it is Christ's victory over these powers that is the script to the "drama" of salvation. Aulén admits that the role of the devil appears infrequently in Irenaeus' work in comparison to the writings of later patristic theologians and his Christus Victor model. Rather, Irenaeus believed that humanity deserves to lie under the dominion of the devil since man has deliberately succumbed to his temptations.[169]

The "purpose of the Incarnation" for Irenaeus, Aulén notes, is "that God in Christ might deliver man from the enemies that hold him in bondage; sin, death, and the devil."[170] Salvation is therefore the work of God alone, and it is this view, Aulén affirms, that "is the nerve of the whole conception."[171] Incarnation and atonement are inseparable in the classic idea, and this is the primary distinction between Christus Victor and all

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[167] The notion that the devil is "lord" of sin and death is concluded by Aulén's reading of Irenaeus who writes, "Those who do not believe in God, and do not do His will, are called sons, and angels, of the devil, since they do the works of the devil." Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV., 41. 2. (From Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 26.)

[168] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 26. Although these powers – sin, death, and the devil – may be "personified" they are nevertheless "objective powers" they are extrinsic to humanity and it is Christ, through his death and resurrection, which frees humanity from the bondage of these powers.

[169] Irenaeus, according Aulén (*Christus Victor*, 28), objected to the notion that the devil "gained certain rights over humanity" therefore they are not under the devil's power which is the primary distinction between Irenaeus' view and Aulén's Christus Victor model. This discrepancy has been one of the primary sources of skepticism of Aulén's critics who question Christus Victor's compatibility with ransom theory in patristic atonement theology.

[170] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 5.

[171] Ibid., 20. Aulén's term "conception" refers to God's plan of salvation.

other atonement theologies. Additionally, only in the classic model is the resurrection essential since it substantiates the victory of Christ over sin, death, and the devil. For Aulén, "[the] cross and the resurrection belong inseparably together. The resurrection interprets the cross and reveals the victory won over sin and death."[172] Further, Irenaeus' view avoids the tendency of later theologians who focus on the death of Christ alone since the obedience of Christ during his earthly ministry is instrumental to his view. His notion of "recapitulation," Aulén notes, demonstrates "how the disobedience of the one man, which inaugurated the reign of sin, is answered by the One Man who brought life. By His obedience Christ 'recapitulated' and annulled the disobedience."[173] Aulén concludes, that in addition to his resurrection, Christ's "triumph" or "victory" included obedience to God which makes the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection instrumental to this motif which distinguishes it from other leading atonement theologies and the most compatible with the New Testament.

Aulén states in *Christus Victor* that all three views of the atonement claim that they are consistent with what Scripture teaches on this topic. Yet since they arrive at different conclusion, he finds their interpretations suspect. Regarding the "primacy of

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[172] Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 213.

[173] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 29. (Aulén's [Ibid.] paraphrase of Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III. 21. 10; III.22.4.) Although Aulén (*Christus Victor*, 16-35) suggests that the classic view was proffered by Irenaeus he is however often credited with his own model of the atonement called the "recapitulation theory" which is based on the notion of "Anakephaloaiosis (Gr. 'recapitulation' or 'summing up'). A term that in its verbal form refers to Christ bringing into unity everything in the universe…Christ as the head of the church, who fulfills God's design in creation and redemptive history." Gerald O'Collins and Edward G. Farrugia, *A Concise Dictionary of Theology*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000), 8. Irenaeus' view is surmised from his interpretation of Eph. 1:9-10, "For [God] has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." Further, Irenaeus writes, "[Christ] was in these last days, according to the time appointed by the Father, united to His own workmanship, inasmuch as He became a man liable to suffering...He commenced afresh the long line of human beings, and furnished us, in a brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation; so that what we had lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God—that we might recover in Christ Jesus." Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V.21.1.

Scripture" in theology Aulén writes, "Scripture remains primary in reference to the tradition. A tradition that is contrary to or not in line with the biblical message cannot be verified as Christian."[174] Scripture has historically protected the church against heterodoxy, Aulén suggests, and therefore should continue to be used to ground its doctrine and theology in the modern era. This relationship is reciprocal since church doctrine and confessional statements in turn protect Scripture from "irresponsible interpretations."[175] Following the exegetical work of William Wrede's *Paulus*, Aulén demonstrates how Paul's epistles support the classic view. Aulén suggests that the word "redemption" is vital for interpreting his letters and, by studying his work through this hermeneutical lens, the following master narrative emerges,

> Paul regards men as held in bondage under objective powers of evil; namely, first of all, the 'flesh,' sin, the Law, death…Paul speaks of another order of powers of evil, demons, principalities, powers, which bear rule in this world, God having permitted them for the time being to have dominion. Satan stands at the head of the demonic powers. The purpose of Christ's coming is to deliver men from all these powers of evil. He descends from heaven, and becomes subject to the powers of this world, that finally He may overcome them by His death and resurrection. The demonic powers 'crucify the Lord of glory…but through that very act they are defeated, and in the Resurrection Christ passes on into the new life. The work of Christ avails for all; as "one died for all, therefore all died," so through His triumph all are set free from the power of evil. [176]

This narrative, based mostly on Wrede's interpretation of Paul, features the basic tenets of dramatic view of the atonement. The central theme of "conflict and triumph" is highlighted along with the "powers of evil under which mankind is in bondage" and most importantly "of victory over them won by Christ come down from heaven—that is, by God Himself come to save."[177] Aulén refers to this narrative in Paul's epistles as "The

[174] Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 68.
[175] Ibid., 74.
[176] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 65-66.
[177] Ibid., 66.

Drama of Redemption" which emerges organically from his letters and supports the classic view. Therefore it is not, according to Aulén, some "logically articulated theory of redemption" contrived by medieval theologians but one that is consonant with the biblical text and therefore the proper continuation of Christian doctrine that is meant for the people of the modern world.

1.1.3.2. Narrative Christus Victor Theory: J. Denny Weaver

Narrative Christus Victor is a current appropriation of Aulén's Christus Victor motif.[178] The term "narrative," which distinguishes these titles, reflects this motif's comparatively sharper focus on the "cosmic story of the confrontation" between the

[178] René Girard's scapegoat theory is likewise considered to be a contemporary retrieval of the Christus Victor motif according to Park (*Triune Atonement,* 29) who writes that Girard "thinks that the Greek fathers rightly depict Satan as being 'caught in the trap of his own mystification' by the cross. God did not trick him. Satan himself converted his own mechanism into a trap, and he foolishly stepped into it. To Girard, Satan is the mimetic cycle, the violence itself. Christ's passion broke the power of mimetic unanimity and the single victim mechanism." Yet for Girard (René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning,* trans. James G. Williams [Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001, 32.) Satan desires that humanity imitate him rather than Christ by "[presenting] himself as a model for our desires…he is…easier to imitate than Christ, for he counsels us to abandon ourselves to all our inclinations in defiance of morality and its prohibitions." (Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, 32) Girard's model is then based mainly upon Abelard's imitative principle and therefore would be more accurately located under the subjective type in Aulén's typology. Further, like Abelard, Girard recognizes God's love, not justice, as primarily operative at the cross that transforms humanity. Humanity is therefore the principal object of the cross and not "God" as objective theorists contend or "death and the devil" as the classic motif suggests. "Love" for Girard "is at one and the same time the divine being" and is essential since it unmasks the "victimage process that underlie the meanings of culture" and "is the only true revelatory power because it escapes from, and strictly limits, the spirit of revenge and recrimination that still characterizes the revelation in our world." For Girard "[only] Christ's perfect love can achieve without violence the perfect revelation toward which we have been progressing—in spite of everything—by way of the dissensions and divisions that were predicted in the Gospels." René Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World,* trans. Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 277. Girard himself makes the distinction between objective and subjective views and, positioning his view with the latter, contrasts his work with the objective approach which he finds to be mistaken. He writes, "medieval and modern theories of redemption all look in the direction of God for the causes of the Crucifixion: God's honor, God's justice, even God's anger, must be satisfied. These theories don't succeed because they don't seriously look in the direction where the answer must lie: sinful humanity, human relations, mimetic contagion, which is the same thing as Satan." Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning,* 150.

"reign of God" and the "rule of Satan" that permeates Scripture.[179] Advocated by J. Denny Weaver, this view incorporates Christus Victor's primary themes apart from suggesting that God advocates violence. According to Weaver, the cross symbolizes Jesus' rejection of violence and consequent triumph over evil. His stance against violence informs his biblical hermeneutic and, accordingly, his atonement theology. Jesus came to bring God's kingdom and exemplify God's rule and not simply to die in order to placate God's wrath or retrieve God's honor. Although Aulén's criticism of Anselm's theory is largely by inference, since his book *Christus Victor* is a historical survey, Weaver's critique is comparatively more direct and comprehensive. Weaver finds Anselm's model very problematic, and aligns his criticism with contemporary liberation theologians such as James Cone who contends that satisfaction theory relies too heavily on "an ahistorical, abstract legal formula"[180] and, accordingly, is both "inadequate and problematic."[181] This theory is "inadequate" because its immaterial suppositions fail to address the historical realities that plague the human condition. Further, it is also "problematic" since it

[179] J. Denny Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2011), 35. Apart from this distinction, the fidelity of Weaver's retrieval to Aulén's motif, which is based on the classic view of the patristic era, is debatable. For instance, Weaver's theory is less concerned with the Christological distinction between the dramatic and subjective view of satisfaction theory which was vital to Aulén's argument and, accordingly, is unburdened to demonstrate the continuity with his model and patristic atonement theology. The language of "Satan" that was instrumental to Aulén's model is also attenuated in this later retrieval and is understood not as a metaphysical entity but an existential reality. Weaver (*The Nonviolent Atonement*, 307) writes, "The devil or Satan is the name for the locus of all power that does not recognize the rule of God. All structures and powers that do not submit to the reign of God worship Satan or the devil defined in this way." Additionally, though narrative Christus Victor stresses the importance of the "drama" in God's economy of redemption, since "God" on the cross does not principally "[reconcile] the world to Himself" but engenders a transformation in humanity, it is perhaps better categorized under the subjective view rather than Aulén's dramatic type. Furthermore, Weaver employs a nonviolent hermeneutic to his biblical exegesis, which informs his atonement theory, and is therefore largely ambivalent to the exegetical work of patristic theologians such as Irenaeus whose exegesis was important to Aulen's thought. The cross, then, is redemptive since it liberates people from the bondage of violence. Although he does not necessarily use his scapegoating mechanism he does subscribe to the model influence model since one imitates Christ who exemplified the reign of God on earth.

[180] J. Denny Weaver, "Violence in Christian Theology," Cross Currents *Cross Currents* 51, no. 2 (2001), 153.

[181] Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 6.

mistakenly sanctions violence engendering abuse of women and children which is a concern of many feminist and womanist theologians whom he cites in his study.[182]

In addition to offering a nonviolent alternative to the Christus Victor model, Weaver's narrative reading of Scripture, which highlights the battle between the reign of God and that of Satan, focuses particularly on the "story of Jesus" particularly his nonviolent disposition which functions as an ethical model for Christians today. Similar to Aulén's approach, Weaver regards the Bible as essential for his atonement theology and, accordingly, a continuation of the Christian tradition. Yet the nonviolent hermeneutical lens through which he reads Scripture distinguishes him from the work of Irenaeus and Aulén's later retrieval of the classic model.[183] Continuing the work of Mennonite theologians such as Gordon Kaufman and John Howard Yoder whose

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[182] Weaver (*The Nonviolent Atonement*, 7-8) defines "violence" as "direct violence of the sword or systemic violence of racism and sexism…This definition obviously includes killing—in war, in murder, and in capital punishment. Violence as harm or damage includes physical harm or injury to bodily integrity. It incorporates a range of acts and conditions that include damage to a person's dignity or self-esteem. Abuse comes in psychological and sociological as well as physical forms: parents who belittle a child and thus nurture a person without self-worth, teachers who brand a child a failure and destroy confidence to learn, a husband who continually puts down his wife and more." Weaver studies the work of feminist theologians who have been critical of satisfaction theory since this view of the cross relates suffering with redemption which engenders abuse against women. For instance, Joanne Carlson Brown and Rebecca Parker in their noted critique of this theory state that women, under the influence of this view, are encouraged to "[remain] silent for years about the experiences of sexual abuse, to not report rape, to stay in marriages in which [women] are battered." Joanne Carlson Brown and Rebecca Parker, "For God So Loved the World?" in *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, eds. Joanne Carlson Brown and Carol R. Bohn, (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989), 2. The work of womanist theologians such as JoAnne Marie Terrell are also considered who contends that womanists have not only a "right" but a "responsibility to challenge Christian language and tradition" which includes, by inference, that of Anselm's satisfaction motif. JoAnne Marie Terrell, *Power in the Blood? The Cross in the African American Experience* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998), 139. Terrell's critique of tradition categories like Anselm's however is comparatively less strident than some of her contemporaries believing that it is unnecessary to abandon language such as "sacrifice" in relation to the cross if it can be "transformed" into a "sacramental notion…that has saving significance for the African American community and for black women in particular." (Ibid.)

[183] "Nonviolence" is defined by Weaver (*The Nonviolent Atonement*, 9) as "covering a spectrum of stances and actions ranging from passive nonresistance at one end to active nonviolent resistance at the other…At a low level of intensity, it includes the gentle coercion of parents who restrain children from disruptive behavior…At a high level of intensity at the other end of the spectrum, positive coercion that constrains or compels the acts of others through pressure would include such actions as social ostracism, public marches and protests, and eventual strikes and boycotts."

mentorship he credits, narrative Christus Victor's nonviolent view is essentially a reaction against all atonement theologies predicated on violence. His critique is mainly directed at the satisfaction view of Anselm which functions on the principal of retributive justice which advocates violence. Weaver writes, "doing justice consists in administering quid pro quo violence…an evil deed involving some level of violence on one side, balanced by an equivalent violence of punishment on the other. The level of violence in the punishment corresponds to the level of violence in the criminal act."[184] This form of litigation has been the basis of the criminal justice system of western cultures particularly the United States which is based on the *lex talionis* from Exodus. Consequently, the satisfaction view of Anselm has been widely accepted by the populace living under these juridical principles. Weaver believes this structure is faulty since, in addition to mistakenly advocating violence and retribution, is based on a "system of determining guilt and inflicting punishment on an offender [which] does nothing for the victim, who is a passive observer of the process. On the offender's side, punishment or exacting vengeance in the name of the state does not teach the perpetrator a better way to live."[185] One of the main objectives of narrative Christus Victor, then, is to demonstrate how atonement theology can be redemptive apart from the use of violent and retributive imagery which is contrary to God's kingdom redeemed humanity is called to build.[186]

Jesus exemplified the principles of the kingdom of God which was characterized by his nonviolent disposition and meant to be paradigmatic for subsequent generations of

[184] Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 3. Weaver attributes this understanding to the work of Timothy Gorringe in *God's Just Vengeance: Crime, Violence and the Rhetoric of Salvation*, vol. 9, *Cambridge Studies in Ideology and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-29.

[185] Ibid., (fn. 4). In this critique Weaver references the work of Howard Zehr in *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice*, A Christian Peace Shelf Selection (Scottsdale: Herald, 1990).

[186] J. Denny Weaver, *The Nonviolent God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2013.

Christians who are admonished to resist violence with nonviolence. The fact that Jesus preached a message of nonviolence is the generally accepted view among most scholars today. Weaver states, "The question," then, "is not whether nonviolent Christians should resist. It is rather *how* Christians should resist."[187] The "story of Jesus" in the Gospels particularly Luke is instructional in this regard which together with the Apocalypse forms the basis of Weaver's project.[188] Jesus' teachings on nonviolence in Luke 6:29 is paradigmatic of this approach, "To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also" and cultivating a charitable heart "from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt." Weaver takes exception to those who interpret New Testament writings such as the Pauline epistles to support satisfaction theory. Weaver argues, rather, that what is central to Paul's writings is the resurrection of Christ which, similar to Aulén's interpretation, emphasizes his victory over "evil and death." Yet different from his study he emphasizes apocalyptical dimension of his epistles in which the "old order," evil and death, is supplanted by the "new order" in which creation is being transformed. "Jesus' resurrection," then "did not simply mark the end of history. It is rather the end (or goal) of history, namely, the reign of God, is breaking into the present and beginning the

[187] Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 9. (Weaver's emphasis.)

[188] Weaver conception of narrative Christus Victor is also derived from his interpretation of Revelation which describes "the confrontation of God's reign" in Jesus' ministry with "Satan's rule on earth, in human history." Weaver, *The Nonviolent God*, 30. Weaver finds the Apocalypse important since it describes God's victory over the evil forces through the nonviolent means of the "Lamb" that has been slain. The "victorious Christ," through his death and resurrection, is considered "worthy" to "take the scroll and to open its seals" (Rev. 5:9) which brings destruction upon the earth. The fact that "the slain lamb" is the one charged with this duty is significant for Weaver since it reveals that God's use of nonviolent agents. The story of Jesus in the Gospels together with the book of Revelation comprises the "two primary biblical anchors" upon which narrative Christus Victor view is constructed. J. Denny Weaver, "Forgiveness and (Non) Violence: The Atonement Connections," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 83, (2009): 338. These "anchors" exhibit best the drama between the forces of evil that continuously attempt to frustrate the reign of God on earth and Christ who is the chosen agent of God who usher in God's reign. Jesus' words in Luke 4:43 are foundational for Weaver's view, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God…for I was sent for this purpose."

process of transforming all of creation."[189] The resurrection, perhaps most importantly, validated "that God was present in the life of Jesus"[190] which is important since God's reign was manifest in his ministry. Further, followers of Jesus will experience victory through the resurrection and an eschatological reward since "the resurrection of Jesus means that being on the side of Jesus is to be on the side of ultimate victory, even if the power of evil in the world kills us. Jesus' resurrection signals that resurrection one day awaits all of us."[191] This is all part of the "narrative" that supports Weaver's view which is based on God's reign breaking in to world replacing the old order, marked by violence and hatred, with the new order, characterized by the divine attributes of love and peace.

Similar to the classic idea of atonement in Aulén's *Christus Victor*, narrative Christus Victor is in continual dialogue with Anselm's satisfaction theory to which Weaver compares and contrast his motif. Perhaps one of the sharpest distinctions, apart from his nonviolent approach, is what the cross achieves. Anselm's objective type proffers that God, or more specifically, the restoration of God's honor is the object of Christ's work. For narrative Christus Victor, the "powers of evil need his death in order to remove his challenge to their power…Since Jesus' mission was not to die but to make visible the reign of God, it is quite explicit that neither God nor the reign of God *needs* Jesus' death in the way that his death is irreducibly *needed* in satisfaction atonement."[192] The discussion then shifts when considering who, or what, is the agent of Jesus' death.

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[189] Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 52. Weaver credits this interpretation of Paul's work, which supports his narrative Christus Victor model, to J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 135-181.

[190] Weaver (*The Nonviolent God*, 24) further explains, "If the resurrection indicates the presence of God in the life of Jesus, then the life of Jesus becomes important for our theology and our lives as Christians. It is there, in Jesus' acts and his teaching, that one sees the character of the reign of God and what it looks like in human form."

[191] Weaver, "Forgiveness and (Non)Violence," 339.

[192] Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 89. (Weaver's emphasis.)

For satisfaction theory, though God did not directly kill Jesus yet his death was nevertheless arranged to satisfy His honor and placate His wrath which, according to Weaver, makes God culpable. The agent for narrative Christus Victor, rather, are the "evil powers" themselves which takes the form of "Satan" or "in earthly structures such as Rome."[193] Humanity is also implicated by Weaver in the drama of Jesus' death "since all humankind is sinful" or "enslaved to the powers that killed Jesus" which oppose God's reign. Sin for Weaver, then, is not an "abstract concept involving a debt owed to the divine honor," rather, "being a sinner means to acknowledge our identification with those who killed Jesus and our bondage to the powers that enslaved them."[194]

When humanity identifies with the powers that killed Jesus whether through acts of omission or commission, they are in sin. Conversely, when they oppose the forces that are antithetical to God's reign, through either active or passive nonviolence, the process of redemption begins. Recognizing these powers, concomitant in violence and hatred, is the liberation that the cross achieves for humanity and through this transformation the reign of God is promoted in the world. Weaver writes, "it is when we then acknowledge our complicity with and bondage to these powers—that is, confess our sin—in their opposition to the reign of God that we can start to envision liberation (salvation) from them, made possible by Jesus' sacrifice for us."[195] Redemption, then, and a transformed life marked by "active participation in the reign of God"[196] which is in contradistinction to being passive recipients of a debt paid by the cross as the satisfaction model suggests.

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[193] Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 90.

[194] Ibid., 94.

[195] Ibid. The term "sacrifice" in reference to the cross for Weaver is not that God desired the blood of Jesus to atone for sin, rather, Jesus sacrificed, or gave his life, in order to make God's reign visible and to bring humanity to an awareness of their sin and to turn from their sin.

[196] Ibid., 98.

People realize salvation when "he or she changes loyalty from the rule of evil to the reign of God by accepting the call of God to new life in the reign of God."[197] As newly liberated people, the promotion of God's reign becomes paramount. The kingdom of God, for Weaver, is characterized by living an ethical life based on the precepts revealed in the Jesus narrative of the Gospels, particularly teachings such as his Sermon on the Mount, which is typified by nonviolence, and sets a positive example for others.

1.2. Defining the Problem

The accusation that satisfaction theory promotes violence is among the basic criticisms of the objective type which Weaver believes to be antithetical to Jesus' teachings. This view has a propensity to be used as pretext for abuse, Weaver contends, which gives voice to the apprehension of this type by womanist and feminist theologians. His view also addresses the concerns of liberation theologians who find Anselm's model "too celestial and not terrestrial enough,"[198] meaning, that atonement theology should be concretized in "history," and not based on some otherworldly "mystical communion with the divine"[199] which is largely irrelevant to the current generation. The liberation view of the cross does not conceive of a distant deity looking down from heaven but rather, according to theologians like James Cone, recognizes "God's concrete involvement in the political affairs of the world, taking sides with the weak and helpless"[200] which is in contrary to the apolitical God articulated in theologies such as Anselm's. For a contemporary atonement theology to be relevant, then, it must be able to speak to the

[197] Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 100.
[198] Park, *Triune Atonement*, 13.
[199] James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, Revised Edition, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 209.
[200] Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 209.

specific concerns that plague humanity such as the issues of poverty, racism, sexism, and oppression. Further, the imposition of metanarratives satisfaction theory proposes such as the cross being "restorative of God's honor" that was "stolen because of human sin" has universal implications. Proposals such as these are regarded as problematic for postmodern theologians who contend, rather, "that each theology reflects a particular context" which advocates "the abandonment of the idea of universally recognizable and independently verifiable foundation of truth."[201] Criticisms by modernists of satisfaction theory such as Aulén's are on methodological grounds, namely his *remoto Christo* approach, which departs from using the Bible as the primary source for theology.

These oppositions to satisfaction and penal substitution theory define one of the leading problems in discourse on atonement theology, that is, its collective discontent with the objective type despite its compatibility, as this dissertation will demonstrate, with the biblical narrative. This model's congruence with Scripture can be attributed to their conception of the primary problem the cross resolves, namely humanity's alienation from God. This view is in contrast to the subjective type which recognizes the main issue that the death of Christ resolves to be social discord. Likewise, this conception is distinct from the dramatic type, which understands the cross and resurrection to effect humanity's liberation from the forces of evil, particularly Satan. All of these proposals can be substantiated by using Scripture. Yet, according to theme of salvation which runs throughout the biblical narrative, the principal effect of Christ's death is atonement between God and humanity which corresponds with the objective type. Once reconciled to God, humanity is then liberated from the evil forces, they receive life instead of death, and their social relationships in God's kingdom are restored. Dismissing objective

[201] Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 6.

atonement theory, then, as the subjective and dramatic types have done, undermines their own proposals since they are both, according to the notion of atonement in the biblical narrative, predicated on humanity first being reconciled to God.

Their divergent views of what the cross primarily achieves helps to identify one of the main distinctions between Aulén's three types. The "focus of the atonement" for the objective type is "Godward," which is in contrast to the "humanward," focus of the subjective type, and the "Satanward" focus of the dramatic type.[202] These different views are attributable to their various conceptions of human sin which is the basic problem to which the cross is the solution. For instance, in the objective type, sin is understood as "not [giving] to God what is owed to him"[203] which is submission of their will to God's will, according to Anselm. For Calvin sin is "a disregard for God's Law and a disobedience of it."[204] In either case, sin results in debt owed to God which humanity is unable to pay. The cross solves this human predicament because God, in Christ, is able to make recompense. Under the subjective type, sin, for Abelard, is understood as "contempt of God and consent to evil."[205] The cross is then perceived as a demonstration of God's love that prompts humanity to repentance. In the dramatic type, Aulén conceives of sin as only one among other "forces of evil,"[206] namely, "death and the devil."[207] The effect of these forces is the captivity of humanity to their power. The cross and resurrection is the victory over these evil forces which liberates humanity. Weaver then subsumes these tenets yet construes sin more broadly as any behavior that is in

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[202] Paul R. Eddy and James Beilby, "The Atonement: An Introduction," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, eds. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 9-21.

[203] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.11.

[204] John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 1986) 114.

[205] Abelard, *Peter Abelard's Ethics*, 57.

[206] Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 75.

[207] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 147.

opposition to God's reign that Jesus brings, particularly acts of violence.[208] The cross is a symbol of victory since it responds nonviolently to violence which serves as a paradigm for humanity.

These diverse conceptions of sin and forgiveness are largely consequent of their distinct interpretations and appropriations of Scripture. Objective type atonement theology that understands sin as "debt" is compatible with important passages like the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us our debts, As we also have forgiven our debtors" in Matt. 6:12, and parables such as the servant who owes the king a debt in Matt. 18:23-35, both of which disclose sin's tangibility. The notion that the cross pays this debt appears in New Testament passages like Col. 2:14, "having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross." Subjective type theology such as moral influence theory views texts such as John 15:13, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," as instrumental to their understanding of the cross. Abelard's commentary on Romans from which much of his conception of redemption is derived highlights verses like Rom. 12:9, "Let love be

[208] Contemporary theologies of atonement which view the cross through the lens of liberation distinguish themselves from the conceptions of these traditional categories. Marit Trelstad has noted, that current womanist, feminist, and liberation theologians have shifted the emphasis of sin from a personal to social reality. Sin therefore is construed in terms of "systemic evils" such as "racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism" rather than an individual's violation of divine Law. Consequently, the cross is no longer interpreted by the use of abstract imagery such as paying a debt, or winning a victory over a cosmic battle with Satan but "is seen in terms of a this-worldly liberation from injustice and oppression." Marit Trelstad, "The Cross in Context," in *Cross Examinations: Readings on the Meaning of the Cross Today*, ed. Marit Trelstad (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2006), 15. Not all liberation theologies, however, fit Trelstad's description. For instance, James Cone includes "violence" in addition to injustice and oppression as the sins from which humanity is redeemed through the cross. The value of the cross is its ability to liberate poor and oppressed people from bondage to these evil forces. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 127. Black women, like black men, according to JoAnne Marie Terrell experience sin as racism yet the former are twice marginalized since they suffer additionally from "sexism and the issues particular to it, including physical domination, economic injustice, political marginalization, and jeopardized reproductive rights." Both Jesus' death and resurrection are important, which further distinguishes this view, since the "image of the crucifix signifies awareness of a God who suffers with us in our experiences of suffering [and] the image of an empty cross signifies faith in the possibility of our own resurrection." JoAnne Marie Terrell, "Our Mother's Gardens: Rethinking Sacrifice," in *Cross Examinations: Readings on the Meaning of the Cross Today*, ed. Marit Trelstad, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2006), 46.

genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good" to support his conception of sin being eradicated by love and not sacrifice. The dramatic type, such as Christus Victor, groups sin, death, and the devil together and perceives the cross as victory over these evil forces. Passages such as Rom. 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death," and 1 John 3:8, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" are instrumental to this motif. Weaver finds the "story of Jesus" in the Gospels essential, and together with the victory language in Revelation comprises "two primary biblical anchors" that situate the narrative Christus Victor.[209]

The multiple appropriations of the biblical text reflect the varied hermeneutical lenses through which they view Scripture. Anselm and Calvin for example appropriate themes for their atonement theology that reveal how humanity is reconciled with God to whom they have been alienated because of sin. Abelard employs texts that demonstrate God's love for humanity and his desire for them to be transformed and mutually reconciled. Aulén and Weaver use Bible passages that expose the cosmic drama of good triumphing over the forces of evil. When comparing these hermeneutical approaches, though, which discloses the primary issues at stake in their atonement theologies, the objective type is comparatively more consistent with Scripture since it gives greater attention to the larger dramatic structure of the canonical narrative. By comparison, what the cross does has been the primary preoccupation of the subjective and dramatic types. Consequently, inadequate consideration of biblical teachings on human sin which

[209] Weaver notes that theologies such as Cone view Scripture through the hermeneutical lens of liberation finding the narrative of Israel's exodus instrumental to support his thought. Since Cone is admittedly "black first," he reads the Bible along with all literature from his particular social location. Black theologians then should neither overemphasize their social context nor the Bible but bring them into "dialectic relation;" Cone states, "the true interpretation of the one is dependent upon viewing it in light of the other." Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 103.

occupies a considerable portion of the biblical story has been neglected. That is, most of their attention has been given over to the solution rather than the problem especially within the larger narrative context of the canon. This narrative, which is comprised of the Bible's diverse literature, has as it major theme God's salvation in which human sin is forgiven.

1.3. Atonement Theology: A Biblical Narrative View

Explicating this story of salvation is among the main objectives of biblical narrative theology which is a better approach for appropriating Scripture to support atonement theology since it views the Bible as a unified yet multifaceted story. This approach is not predicated on speculative historical reconstructions upon which some of these views are based, and avoids using passages or certain books removed from their wider context of the canonical narrative. Biblical narrative theology views the canon as one story in two parts: the Old and the New Testaments.[210] The books of the New Testament are then viewed in reference to their Jewish context which suggests that the latter is intelligible only in light of the former and a continuation of its narrative. This approach is valuable for accurately discerning how important themes such as salvation, which ties the two parts of the biblical narrative together, are operative in the canon. Another advantage of this approach is that it encourages diverse interpretations of topics such as sin and the cross within the larger framework of the canonical narrative. Biblical narrative theology will then be used as the primary approach in this dissertation since it offers the best possibility for interpreting what Scripture discloses about the problem of

[210] The term "Old Testament" is used with deference to the Hebrew Scriptures and does not suggest that the Jewish canon is anachronistic or has been superseded by the New Testament according to scholars like N. T. Wright.

sin, and the solution that is the cross, which has been the major cause of divergence among the three main types of atonement theology.

Recent scholars whose theological work attends to the narrative structure of the canon can be found in the New Testament study of Frank J. Matera whose primary focus is finding unity among the diversity of its literature. Matera's work is based on the presupposition that the "[biblical] writings possess an inner coherence that is ultimately rooted in God's self-revelation."[211] The goal of his theology of the Bible is to relate the various books "into a unified whole without harmonizing them."[212] Matera's notion of "diverse unity" tries to discover areas of agreement among the biblical texts while respecting its rich diversity and this hermeneutic informs the development of his New Testament theology. Matera situates his methodology between the diachronic and synchronic approaches—the former method he believes to be problematic because it overly individuates each book of the Bible while the latter too readily conflates them. His alternative approach studies the canon through a literary/rhetorical lens that reads the text "plainly." Matera's work is based on two assumptions, "(1) there is a rich diversity in the way the New Testament writers express the experience of salvation the first believers enjoyed because of God's salvific work in Christ; (2) there is an underlying unity in the diverse theologies of the New Testament."[213] The New Testament writings are diverse because they are addressing specific circumstances within varied contexts and all have different starting points.[214] Yet all New Testament authors are sharing the common

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[211] Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Theology: Exploring Diversity and Unity*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), xxvii.

[212] Ibid., xxx-xxxi.

[213] Ibid., xxviii.

[214] Matera (Ibid., xxviii) categorizes the twenty-seven books of the New Testament under four headings: the "Synoptic Tradition," "Pauline Tradition," "Johannine Tradition," and "Other Voices." The point of departure for the Synoptic Tradition is "the kingdom of God." The "gospel about Jesus Christ: the

experience of salvation, or being saved, from a life of sin to a new life that is reconciled to God through the cross. Matera appropriates several recent studies in biblical narrative theology and integrates them to surmise the following "master story,"

> Humanity finds itself in a predicament of its own making from which it cannot extricate itself. This predicament, which is experienced as a profound alienation from God, is the result of humanity's rebellion against God. It affects Jew and Gentile alike. Because humanity cannot reconcile itself to God or free itself from this predicament, God has graciously sent his own Son into the world to redeem the world. Those who believe and accept this gracious offer of salvation, Jew and Gentile alike, are incorporated into a community of believers that God has redeemed and sanctified through Christ. Redeemed and sanctified, this new community lives by the power of God's Spirit as it waits for the consummation of all things.[215]

Matera deduces five themes from this master narrative, "(1) humanity in need of salvation, (2) the bringer of salvation, (3) the community of the sanctified, (4) the life of the sanctified, and (5) the hope of the sanctified."[216] These themes "correspond to the theological categories of (1) Christian anthropology and soteriology, (2) Christology, (3) ecclesiology, (4) ethics, (5) eschatology."[217] The major categories that emerge from this master story are all contingent upon the subject of sin and humanity's corresponding need of salvation made possible through the cross. Matera concludes, "New Testament

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good news of what God has accomplished in the death and resurrection of his son" is the starting point for the Pauline Tradition. The Johannine Tradition begins with "the incarnation" which is the "Gospel's affirmation that the word became flesh." This theme is reiterated Johannine letters which highlight "that Jesus, in all of his humanity, is the Christ, the Son of God." The starting point of the "Other Voices" are varied but collectively enrich the New Testament's theology, "Christ's high priesthood" is the unique point of departure for the Letter to Hebrews with the "wisdom that comes from above" the starting point for the letter of James. The catholic letters, or general epistles, such as 1 Peter give instructions on the "Christian life, while 2 Peter and Jude are concerned with the threat of false teaching and contribute to the church's understanding of the danger that error poses to its life."

[215] The master story from Matera (Ibid., 427-428) is derived from a combination of the biblical theology of five recent authors of New Testament Theology, François Vouga, *Une théologie du Nouveau Testament* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2001.); Peter Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992, 1999); Ferdinand Hahn, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002); I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 2004); Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: a canonical and synthetic approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

[216] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, xxx.

[217] Ibid. These categories, Matera submits, "are not intended as a theological straightjacket to control the 'unruly theology' of the New Testament."

theology begins with soteriology. Apart from soteriology there would be no need for Christology, ecclesiology, Christian ethics, or eschatology."[218] The human predicament or the problem of sin in light of the biblical narrative must therefore be understood first. Only then will the solution to the problem or the cross be intelligible in the New Testament story.

To support Matera's master story, the work of N. T. Wright will be used whose narrative exegesis provides an Old Testament foundation for New Testament Christian anthropology and soteriology. Together, these two works will offer a complete biblical narrative framework for this study in atonement theology. Wright suggests that a "pre-understanding of first-century Judaism" is necessary for comprehending "Jesus within his historical context"[219] and, accordingly, New Testament theology. New Testament interpretations, then, must be viewed in light of the story of Israel.[220] Similar to Matera, Wright contends that the Bible is constructed as a single story divided into the old and new covenants with smaller narratives both comprising and connecting the two parts. Although Wright's approach and project objectives are similar to Matera's, his work is distinguishable since he views the text from the historical-critical perspective considering himself among the adherents of the "Third Quest" for the historical Jesus. Wright believes that studies in biblical theology should embrace history believing that theology and history are not mutually exclusive.[221] Rather than avoid responding to historical

[218] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 479. The sequence of these themes therefore is essential and all are predicated on the first theme, "humanity in need of salvation."

[219] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament People of God*, vol. 1, *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), xiii.

[220] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, vol. 2, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 5.

[221] Most biblical theologies attempt to address the critique of the "theology" of the Bible by scholars such as Heikki Räisänen who "claims that the historical and theological must be kept separate [arguing] that it is not the job of New Testament scholar to deal with theology; rather their sphere is

criticism's skepticism of biblical theology, he addresses the main contentious issues and "[engages] in debate with opposing views."[222] Wright is also critical of what he believes to be deficiencies in one and two-volume New Testament theologies that are too short and do not sufficiently explain the relationship between the old and new covenants which together disclose God's historical relationship with humanity and his overall plan for the universe. Wright in his work tries then to synthesize the diverse biblical narratives into a single story without over simplifying them and "offer a consistent hypothesis on the origin of Christianity…which will set out new ways of understanding major movements and thought-patterns, and suggest new lines that exegesis can follow up."[223]

Wright envisions himself primarily as a historian. Therefore he is attentive to such details as using the name "Jesus" rather than "Christ" because "Messiahship is itself in question throughout the gospel story, and the task of the historian is to see things as far as possible through the eyes of the people of the time."[224] His reluctance to use the name "Christ," admittedly, is not to avoid offending his Jewish friends but this messianic connotation has a specific and quite limited meaning. He argues that the name Christ was not itself a 'divine' title; and was not, in early Christianity, "reducible to a mere proper name." Similarly, Wright does not use the term "god" in the univocal sense which is his rational for not capitalizing this name in his work since people of the first-century did not

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history. The New Testament scholar can write a purely descriptive account of the early church, but nothing more. To write theology is to be prescriptive, and the New Testament scholar as such has no authority to prescribe anything to anybody." I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 2004), 17. (Heikki Räisänen, *Beyond New Testament Theology: A Story and a Program* [London: SCM Press, 1990].) Wright's work in particular answers these objections by demonstrating that the compatibility of historical and theological scholarship to offer a better understanding of the biblical text. Wright also demonstrates that historical research is not void of influence is to suggest that history is essentially "objective" in its data which challenges the critique of Räisänen believing that no historical research is void of bias whether theological or ideological.

[222] Wright, *People of God*, xiii.

[223] Ibid., xiv.

[224] Ibid.

use this term in the same way. Another problem that Wright recognizes in various New Testament theologies is that they do not "include the teaching (or the facts of the life, death and resurrection) of Jesus, but merely the beliefs of the New Testament writers *about* Jesus, or perhaps those beliefs expressed mythologically *in terms of* Jesus-stories."[225] Yet these historical details are essential for properly understanding the New Testament narrative and for exposing defective exegetical conclusions.

The biblical narrative theology of Matera and Wright supports the general premise of atonement theorists that sin is the "problem" which separates humanity from God and that they are in profound need of forgiveness. Further that reconciliation must come from an agency apart from humanity because sin has rendered them incapable of making adequate atonement. Yet neither author, since they are focusing on the larger canonical narrative, offers a precise understanding of what sin is and its specific effects which is the primary difference among the various atonement theologies. The biblical theology of Gary A. Anderson on the topic of sin is particularly instructive in this regard because it supplements the works of Matera and Wright by offering a comprehensive survey of the theological understanding of sin in the Hebrew Scriptures which influenced the New Testament authors.

Anderson's conception of sin came when studying the *Damascus Covenant*[226] found among the Dead Sea Scrolls where he recognized a noticeable shift from the

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[225] Wright, *People of God*, 22. (Wright's emphasis)

[226] The *Damascus Covenant* is significant since it is among the few texts that existed prior to the major archeological discovery at Qumran. Originally called the *Fragments of a Zadokite*, its name was changed since its connection with the Zadokite community was questionable. The document was later associated with the Essene community and subsequently renamed the *Damascus Covenant*, or *Damascus Document*, because of its frequent references to "Damascus." The document contains various laws concerning "ritual purity, the Sabbath, and general *halakha*." Ian C. Werrett, *Ritual Purity and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. LXXII, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*, ed. Florentino García Martínez (Boston: Brill Academic, 2007), 19-20.

predominant Hebrew Bible metaphor of sin as a "burden," "weight," or "stain" from that contained in the Qumran document which describes sin as a "debt" that required repayment.[227] This is significant because it suggests that sin "has been recorded in the heavenly account books"[228] and that the "sinner" is responsible to God for making recompense. This transition in metaphors reveals that sin "has a history," Anderson deduces, and its "developments…had an immeasurable effect on how biblical ideas were put into practice."[229] His conclusion contradicts the contemporary notion that sin is a subjective category, taking the form of personal moral guilt, when in fact it is more accurately categorized as an objective entity, extrinsic the human person. Anderson writes,

> Sin in biblical thought possesses a certain 'thingness.' Sin is not just a guilty conscience; it presumes, rather, that some-"thing" is manufactured on the spot and imposed on the sinner. In the early strata of the Bible it is either a burden that is lowered upon the shoulders of the guilty or a stain that dis-color's one's hands; in the later strata the image of a stain remains, but the image of the burden is replaced by the idea that a debit has been recorded in the heavenly account books.[230]

Throughout Scripture, whether sin is construed as a "burden," "stain," or "debt," it is construed as having a distinct ontology that cannot be remitted by merely changing one's mind or assuaging one's guilty conscience. Anderson uses the "enduring legacy"[231] of slavery in the United States as a contemporary illustration for conceiving sin in objective terms. The residual effect of the American slave trade, Anderson notes, has created a "stain" on this country that is need of "cleansing." Although those who propagated slavery are deceased, the consequences, or tangibility of their sin still remains. The reality

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[227] Anderson, *Sin: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), ix.
[228] Ibid., x.
[229] Ibid., ix.
[230] Ibid., x.
[231] Ibid., 3.

of sin's legacy is supported through the Hebrew canon in passages such as Exodus 20:5 when God is described as "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation (Exod 20:5)."[232] The lasting effect of sin in the Old Testament is not a matter of "identifying the guilty and seeking confession…some 'thing' will still be left, even after the wrong-doers have been singled out."[233] Sin, because it is a "thing," cannot "simply be brushed aside" but requires a "physical" removal for reconciliation to occur.

Further evidence in the Hebrew canon that sin has residual effects can be found in the psalmist's prayer "that God will 'turn his face' from what he has done."[234] Anderson in his analysis of the psalmist's petition detects "a seriousness about his speech" since,

> If God "visits his sin," from what he has done, the consequences will be grave. This is because sin has created some thing that God's eyes can truly see. That is why God must reassure the penitent whose sin has been forgiven that the sin has been removed 'as far as east is from west.' It takes distance such as this to put the matter out of God's purview.[235]

Sin, though, is not "just a thing" but a "particular kind of thing." Anderson writes,

> When one sins, something concrete happens: one's hands may become stained, one's back may become burdened, or one may fall into debt. And the verbal expressions that render the idea of forgiveness follow suit: stained hands are *cleansed*, burdens are *lifted*, and debts are either *paid off* or *remitted*. It is as though a stain, weight, or bond of indebtedness is created ex nihilo when one offends against God. And that thing that sin has created will continue to haunt the offenders until it has been engaged and dealt with.[236]

Human sin, then, cannot be remediated by a "change of heart" on the part of the sinner but requires repayment in physical currency. Anderson's study of sin in the biblical

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[232] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 4.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid., ix. Ps. 27:9, "Turn not thy servant away in anger" and Psalm 103:12, "as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us" reflect the psalmist's perception of sin.
[236] Ibid. (Anderson's emphasis)

narrative offers clarity to this human problem which is the primary reason for the cross. His work compliments Wright's whose Second Temple view offers a basis for Matera's New Testament theology that considers the themes of sin and forgiveness. Together these studies in biblical theology offer clarity to the theme of salvation in canonical narrative, and bring fresh insight onto theological thinking about the subject of the atonement.

CHAPTER TWO: THE PROBLEM OF SIN: A BIBLICAL NARRATIVE VIEW

The biblical theology of Matera, Wright, and Anderson, particularly their study of the topic of sin in Scripture, better clarifies one of the primary issues that distinguish the main types of atonement theology. A firm grasp of the "problem" that corresponds with the Bible is therefore important since it will indicate the characteristics necessary for the "solution" that is the cross which further differentiates their views. Since the former subject is instrumental to the latter, a closer study of the problem of sin is essential and therefore will occupy the content of the present chapter of this dissertation. This chapter will begin with the work of Wright which provides a larger Old Testament framework for the specific study of sin in the Second Temple period by Anderson that will follow. Anderson's work will lay sufficient groundwork for Matera's subsequent analysis of Christian anthropology in the New Testament which is among the primary sources used by theologians studying atonement. Together, the problem of sin from the biblical narrative view will emerge and will be employed as the basis for discussing the solution, which is the cross that will be considered in the next chapter.

2.1. Sin and Exile: The Work of N. T. Wright

Among the primary values of Wright's work, in addition to connecting the Old and New Testaments which creates an overarching framework for its "biblical narrative," is its provision of a historical context to this diverse literature. Wright's study offers a lucid apologetic against critics of biblical theology who believe that a distinction should

be made between history and theology regarding the canon.[237] Wright in his work embraces both history and theology and demonstrates how their congruity. Since most of the discourse in this debate centers on the person of Jesus, Wright begins his study by exploring the various biblical criticisms which attempt to decipher between what Jesus "actually said," or "history," and later church accretions, or "theology."[238] He employs a multidisciplinary approach to his work for more accurately identifying these distinctions by setting into dialogue the literary, historical, and theological works of the Second Temple. Wright describes his approach to this study as "*critical realism*" which is situated between the two epistemological poles of "objective" and "subjective" historical inquiry.[239] The former view he believes to be problematic since it assumes history is a compilation of "objective" facts while the latter is equally questionable since it is grounded in the individual, or subjectively, which is often capricious and conflicting. This "either-or" distinction is a false dichotomy according to Wright who takes a "both-and" approach recognizing that while all historical facts are interpreted, and therefore not "objective," this does not infer that historical content is void of objectivity or relative.

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[237] Heikki Räisänen is cited by Marshall (*New Testament Theology*, 17-18) as among the most "vocal [critics]" of New Testament theologies today and outlines his criticism under four main points. "First, Räisänen claims that the historical and the theological must be kept separate. He argues that it is not the job of New Testament scholars as New Testament scholars to deal with theology; rather their sphere is history. The New Testament scholar can write purely a descriptive account of the early church, but nothing more. To write theology is to be prescriptive, and the New Testament scholar as such has no authority to prescribe anything to anybody. Second, Räisänen also argues that the nature of the material confines us to writing history of the religion of the early Christians…Third, a study confined to the New Testament documents is said to rest on an artificial limitation; it is determined by a canonization process that represents a later theological decision and has no basis in the early history of the church. Fourth, there is so much contradiction between the documents that a theology of the New Testament in the sense of a unified theological outlook common to the documents cannot be extracted from them."

[238] Wright discusses in particular the work of Rudolph Bultmann finding points of agreement with his work, especially its approach that considers the importance of Jesus' historical context but disagrees with his presupposition that "the essence of early Christianity as only marginally or tangentially Jewish" and that the "main lines run, rather, through the Hellenistic world." Wright, *People of God*, 343.

[239] Wright, *People of God*, 32. (Wright's emphasis) Wright (Ibid., 35) contends that critical realism "acknowledges the *reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower* (hence 'realism'), along the spiraling path of *appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known* (hence 'critical')."

Wright's primary approach encourages dialogue between history (data) and theology (interpretation) which is foundational to his work yet regrettably lacking in current scholarly discourse.

2.1.1. The New Testament within the Second Temple Narrative

As a historian and critical realist, Wright views the biblical stories through the hermeneutical lens of the Second Temple period rather than from a detached twentieth-century perspective which is often presumptuous and mistaken.[240] Valuable to his study, in addition to the various books of the canon, are the contributions of extracanonical literature such as the work of the Jewish historian Josephus, apocryphal literature such as Maccabees and Tobit, and rabbinic literature of the period like the Targums to reconstruct first century Judaism's worldview. Studies in assorted Jewish and Hellenistic cultures of this era such as their customs, symbols, and beliefs, are inducted into his reconstruction project finding them altogether imperative for accurately interpreting the biblical texts.[241]

From his study of these various Second Temple texts and cultures, Wright surmises a master narrative which is comprised of the smaller stories in both the Old and New Testaments. A concise outline of this biblical story is offered by Wright and comprised of 'five' *acts*: "1-Creation; 2-Fall; 3-Israel; 4-Jesus. The writing of the New Testament—including the writing of the gospels—would then form the first scene in the

[240] The "Second-Temple" period is the timeframe from approximately 400 BC to 200 AD. Wright's historical inquiry of is targeted at the era of "middle Judaism" located between the pre-exilic period of "early Judaism" and the rabbinic era, and following, of "later Judaism" Wright, *People of God*, 147.

[241] Wright, *People of God*, 152. Unlike many contemporary scholars, Wright finds the cultures of Judaism and Hellenism complementary rather than competitive and therefore important to his reconstruction project and yet adverse to the viewpoint of many modern historical studies of this period.

fifth act, and would simultaneously give hints…of how the play is supposed to end."[242] This outline is imperative since it suggests that all biblical interpretations are to be viewed within the wider context of this Old and New Testament overarching narrative. Many New Testament scholars tend to narrowly fixate their attention on the fourth act, Jesus, to the detriment of acts one, two, and three, or incorrectly focus on act five to the exclusion of all others. This master narrative then helps exegetes navigate between the mistake of narrow interpretations that do not fit the wider canonical context and to "break through the log-jams caused by regular over-simplifications."[243]

One of the shorter stories that comprise this master story that receives special consideration in the New Testament is Jesus' parable of the Wicked Tenets in Mark 12. The tenets in this story are the Jewish leadership, with Israel likely the vineyard, and the God of Israel the vineyard's owner.[244] The tenants, since they either mistreat or put to death the servants whom God sends including the "heir" to the vineyard, are destroyed and the property given to other tenants. Wright believes this parable to be a microcosm of the larger canonical narrative since it illustrates the relationship between God, his creation, and the leaders of Israel whom God displaced because of their infidelity. Wright offers the following summary of the overarching biblical narrative,

> It was always the intention of this god that creation should one day be flooded with his own life, in a way for which it was prepared from the beginning. As part of the means to this end, the creator brought into being a creature which, by bearing the creator's image, would bring wise and loving care to bear upon creation. By a tragic irony, the creature in question has rebelled against this intention. But the creator has solved this problem in principle in an entirely appropriate way, and as a result is now moving creation once more towards its originally intended goal. The implementation of this solution now involves the

[242] Wright, *People of God*, 141-142.
[243] Ibid., 143.
[244] Ibid., 75-76.

> indwelling of this god within his human creatures and ultimately within the whole creation, transforming it into that for which it was made in the beginning."[245]

Wright's narrative corresponds sequentially with that of Matera's master story particularly regarding act two, or "the Fall," which corresponds to Matera's first theme, humanity in need of salvation," and act four, which considers the life of "Jesus" for through the lens of Second Temple Judaism. This act parallels Matera's second theme which deals with New Testament Christology, "the bringer of salvation."[246] Different however is Wright's study of "Israel," or act three, which supplements Matera's New Testament theology and offers a comparatively thorough canonical narrative.

2.1.2. The Second Temple Worldview: Land, Torah, and Temple

Wright begins his study of this third act by analyzing the primary symbols of first century Judaism which are Land, Torah, and Temple along with their adherence to kosher laws, the Sabbath, circumcision, and the preservation of Jewish ethnicity.[247] Although Israel was in the Land, had the Torah and the Temple, and were keeping the covenantal prescriptions, they did not consider themselves "free" since they lacked national

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[245] Wright, *People of God*, 98.

[246] Matera's third, fourth, and fifth theme are also present in Wrights and the reception of the Holy Spirit, the church, and the consummation of history which together comprise the fifth act.

[247] Among the symbols of Torah, Land, and Temple, the Torah is among the most significant during the Second Temple period, according to Wright, since Judaism while in exile did not in actually possess the latter two; Wright states, "God had given Israel the Torah, so that by keeping it she may be his people, and can be relied upon to rescue from her pagan enemies and confirmed as ruler in her own land." Wright, *People of God*, 221. "In the Diaspora," Wright further contends, "the study and practice of Torah increasingly became the focal point of Jewishness. For millions of ordinary Jews, Torah became a portable Land, a movable Temple…The Pharisees in particular, in conjunction with the burgeoning synagogue movement, developed the theory that study and practice of Torah could take the place of Temple worship. Where two or three gather to study Torah, the Shekinah rests upon them…In the presence of Torah one was in the presence of the covenant god." Wright, *People of God*, 228-229. During the exile and later in the Diaspora, the Torah was significant since it distinguished Judaism from the rest of their "pagan" neighbors since in the Torah kosher laws, Sabbath-keeping, and circumcision were all prescribed which set them apart from their Gentile neighbors. Keeping Torah, then, meant fidelity to the covenant.

sovereignty because they were under the jurisdiction of Rome.[248] Israel, then, at the onset of the first century, was eagerly awaiting a savior who would liberate them from their *de facto* exile and establish God's kingdom which in turn would reinstate their nation's independence. These symbols, together with their eschatological expectations, constituted the Second Temple "worldview" which permeated their literature of this period.

This worldview, which was common to first century Judaism, is distinct from the "mindset" of the competing various Jewish sects. Second Temple sectarianism at this time was comprised of Zealots, such as Sicarii (or "dagger-men"), Pharisees, which, according to Wright was a marriage of "piety and politics," Sadducees, and Essenes. There were also various subgroups within these sects that diverged based on their assorted theological views within them such as the Hillelites, or "city-dwellers," and Shammaites, comprised largely of rural conservatives.[249] Although each group saw their sect as exemplifying "authentic" Israel and, consequently, perceiving the other as apostate (the particular mindset of the Essenes), they nonetheless shared the common hope of liberation, or redemption, which Wright identifies as the forthcoming "new exodus."[250] Israel's common eschatology constituted "a broad family resemblance"[251] and this belief, along with their monotheistic conception of God, based on the Shema: "The LORD our God is one LORD" and further that they believed they are the chosen covenant people of the God who created the world, created a strong family bond.[252] These core beliefs appear throughout the Old Testament, Wright contends, and informs significantly the Second Temple worldview and, accordingly, the New Testament writers.

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[248] Wright, *People of God*, 224.
[249] Ibid., 194.
[250] Ibid., 217.
[251] Ibid., 244-245.
[252] Ibid., 247. (This is also referred to by Wright as Second Temple covenant theology.)

Israel understood the purpose of their election as being "the light of the world."[253] Fidelity to the covenant was therefore essential and blessings and curses were predicated upon the nation's faithfulness. The austerity of their current situation, particularly since they lacked national autonomy, was construed then as a curse and affirmed that they were in violation of the covenant. Far from reigning, they were in fact suffering at the hands of their foreign rules. The promise of the prophets during their Babylonian experience had yet to be fulfilled since they were still in captivity and God "had not returned to Zion" nor did the Shekinah of the Lord fill the Temple in fulfillment of prophecy. Therefore the exile "is not really over" as expressed in "post exilic" passages such as Neh. 9:36, "Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that thou gavest to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves." Israel's exile therefore had "continued long after the 'return,' long after the world of Ezra and Nehemiah."[254] The passages from the prophets created Second Temple eschatology, according to Wright, that can be summarized in the following concise narrative, "The present age is still part of the 'age of wrath;' until the Gentiles are put in their place and Israel, and the Temple, fully restored, the exile is not really over, and the blessings promised by the prophets are still to take place."[255]

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[253] Wright, *People of God*, 247.

[254] Ibid., 270.

[255] Ibid. Some scholars, such as Mark Seifrid, take exception to Wright's notion of a unified Second Temple worldview since "this schema ignores those [in early Judaism] who enjoyed the reconstruction of the Temple, the Maccabean victories, Hasmonean rule, and even the status quo under the Romans." Mark A. Seifrid, "Blind Alleys in the Controversy over the Paul of History," *Tyndale Bulletin* 45.1 (1994): 86 (Fn., 44). Further, Seifrid (Ibid., 87) writes, "the early Jewish tradition of an extended period of exile for Israel is more complicated…Dissatisfaction with the condition of Jerusalem and the Temple is not precisely the same as the theme of a continuing exile. And to view the exile as in some sense continuing us bit the same as regarding 'all' of Israel as being in exile or estranged from God. Variations in the use of the exile image suggest that is served as a rather fluid *topos* rather than as a settled and unchanging interpretation of Israel's experience." (Seifrid's emphasis.) Second Temple texts that Seifrid offers which contradict Wright's narrative are Sirach 24, Tobit 14:5-7, and 2 Maccabees 1:27-29; 15:37.

2.1.3. Sin and the Prospect of Salvation: First Century Judaism

According to Wright, Israel's current "exile" therefore was collectively viewed as a consequence of their sin.[256] Roman subjugation was not recognized as an aberration but like the Babylonian exile was a sign of God's punishment because of their covenant violation. Their hope of liberation involves primarily God's forgiveness of Israel's sin and further when YHWH returns to save them he will avenge them by his appointed "King" who will defeat their enemies and bring national restoration.[257] Since Roman rule delegitimized Israel's claim to the Land and also that the Temple they believed lacked its former glory, the work of the coming King will involve restoring the Temple's glory, cleansing the Land of foreign rule, renewing the earth, and vindicate/exalt Israel.[258] Second Temple Judaism was naturally preoccupied with the expectation of their coming King/Messiah-figure who will liberate Israel from their *de facto* exile.[259] The "historical situation" of Second Temple then was characterized by the "pressing needs

[256] This Second Temple conception of "exile" is supported by Martien A. Halvorson-Taylor who writes, "Exile is the ultimate expression of YHWH's disfavor." Martien A. Halvorson-Taylor, *Enduring Exile: The Metaphorization of Exile in the Hebrew Bible* (Boston: Brill Academic, 2010), 36.

[257] Wright, *People of God*, 307. The possibility of this "King" being the prophesied Messiah who is the "true Son of David" is plausible based on Wright's deduction of his exegetical work in Daniel and 4 Ezra which informed the various sects of Second Temple Judaism.

[258] Wright, *People of God*, 336. On the conception of vindication in the first century worldview, Sanders writes, "Belief in the punishment of destruction of the wicked, and just retribution against even the righteous for their transgressions, is so common [in Jewish literature] that it is almost unnecessary to give examples." E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 113. A summary of Second Temple eschatology is given by E. P. Sanders "Many Jews looked forward to a new and better age…The hopes centered on the restoration of the people, the building or purification of the temple and Jerusalem, the defeat or conversion of the Gentiles, and the establishment of purity and righteousness…The hope that God would fundamentally change things was a perfectly reasonable hope for people to hold who read the Bible and who believed that God had created the world and had sometimes intervened dramatically to save his people. E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE – 66 CE*. (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992), 298, 303. Wright, *People of God*, 333.

[259] The conception of the Messiah in Second Temple Judaism is a "righteous ruler who sets matters aright in accordance with God's timing and purposes for Israel." Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "Messianic Ideas in the Apocalyptic and Related Literature of Early Judaism," in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 97.

of…liberation—from oppression, from debt, from Rome" and their hope was "focused on the coming of the kingdom of Israel's god."[260]

The notion of exile, due to the nation's sin, and their corresponding need for salvation are instrumental for understanding the development of these themes in the New Testament narrative, according to Wright.[261] Sin was the reason for Israel's exile and as long as they were in violation of the covenant the nation would remain a subjugated people. One of the answers to the pressing questions of why God has yet to act on behalf of Israel is articulated by Wright,

> The explanation for the apparent inactivity of the covenant god at the present moment is that his is delaying in order to give time for more people to repent; if he were to act now, not only the sons of darkness but a good number of the sons of light would be destroyed in the process. As a result of this process of delay, those who do not repent will be "hardened" so that, when the time comes, their punishment will be seen to be just.[262]

Since God's covenant promises were "inextricable bound" with God's righteousness, Israel's sin cannot be overlooked. If God's people were to be associated with his righteousness then their sin must be removed. Wright concludes, "If Israel's god was to deliver his people from exile, it could only be because he had somehow dealt with the

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[260] Wright, *People of God*, 169-170.

[261] Paula Fredriksen likewise affirms that to understand the New Testament notion of sin one must probe this conception as it is understood in the context of Second Temple Judaism, "a time when leprosy and death defiled, when fire and water made clean, and when on approached the altar of God with purifications, blood offerings, and awe." The overarching presupposition of this era, according to Fredriksen, matches that of Wright which contends that "the god of Israel was about to redeem his people and establish his kingdom." Paula Fredriksen, *Sin: The Early History of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 5.

[262] Wright, *People of God*, 271. (Wright's emphasis) Another passage from Daniel is used to support Israel's present thought, "To thee, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us confusion of face, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those that are near and those that are far away, in all the lands to which thou hast driven them, because of the treachery which they have committed against thee. To us, O Lord, belongs confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness; because we have rebelled against him" (Dan. 9:7-9).

problem which had caused her to go there in the first place, namely her sin."[263] Important prophetic passages that support this Second Temple view are found in prophetic literature such as Jeremiah,

> Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah…And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."… "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when the city shall be rebuilt for the LORD from the tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate…The whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be sacred to the LORD. It shall not be uprooted or overthrown any more for ever. **(**Jer. 31:31, 34, 38, 40) [264]

Throughout the prophetic literature of the Old Testament canon "there runs the twin theme: Israel's exile is the result of her own sin, idolatry and apostasy, and the problem will be solved by YHWH's dealing with the sin and thus restoring his people to their inheritance. Exile will be undone when sin is forgiven."[265]

Since there is a definitive causal relationship between sins and their effects, the nation's restoration, based genuine repentance, and true fidelity to the covenant, will all be signs that their sins have been forgiven.[266] Additional indicators that their exile is

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[263] Wright, *People of God*, 272.

[264] Ibid., 273. (Wright's citation of Jeremiah.)

[265] Ibid. The "forgiveness of sin," however, Wright notes, is primarily on the national scale and secondarily a personal matter in Second Temple Jewish thought. Wright (*Victory of God*, 265-266) further notes that the definition of the term "sinners" in the first century context was not definitive. "Sinners" could have been a pejorative term and synonymic with "the phrase 'people of the land'" who were those who lived in the land when Israel returned from exile. Since they were of "dubious pedigree" they were looked down upon by those whose ancestry was more "certain." This name could have also referred to Jewish people who "did not follow rabbinic observances of Torah." "Sinners" could have also been non-Pharisaic Jews who were considered "second-class citizens" since they did not follow Pharisaic law. This last possibility would have been those who were also non-Pharisaic but additionally "deliberately flouted the Torah;" A prostitute would be an example of this lattermost category. Wright notes that the "sinners" to whom Jesus was often addressing comprised the people of the last two categories yet "he was happy to associate with the Pharisees if they were happy to associate with him."

[266] This view is supported by Sanders (*Jesus and Judaism* , 106) who writes, "One of the themes of passages in Jewish literature which look forward to the restoration of Israel is the need for repentance, and the same theme appears often in connection with the inclusion of Gentiles."

complete are, "the Temple will be rebuilt" and the "Torah kept perfectly by a new-covenant people with renewed hearts."[267] Second Temple Judaism's thought then was situated between the existent reality that their creator God appeared absent and the expectation of his future return when all creation would be restored.[268] After God deals with Israel's sins and the exile is over a "new covenant between Israel and her God" will then be established.[269] The nation will then experience "real forgiveness of sins" and Israel's God will "pour out his holy spirit, so that she would be able to keep the Torah properly, from the heart."[270] God's kingdom will be realized on earth through the reign of his appointed King. This messianic figure, then, will lead Israel's return from exile and they would finally experience the enduring "forgiveness of sins."[271]

2.2. Major Biblical Images for Sin: The Work of Gary A. Anderson

Wight's notion of sin and exile is important for identifying the consequences of Israel's breaking their covenant with God. This study serves as a paradigm for

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[267] Wright, *People of God*, 280.

[268] Wright's biblical exegesis varied from scholars like Albert Schweitzer on this particular point. Although Wright valued the work of Schweitzer he differed in his eschatological understanding believing that he mistakenly held an apocalyptic notion, like many of the ancient Greeks, that the world would one day be destroyed. Israel's rescue" would not "[consist] of the end of the space-time universe, and/or of Israel's future enjoyment of a non-physical, 'spiritual' bliss. That would simply contradict creational monotheism, implying that the created order was residually evil, and to be simply destroyed." Wright, *People of God*, 300. Wright contends, rather, that Judaism, based on their interpretation of the Scriptures, the world would be renewed or restored and not destroyed.

[269] Wright, *People of God*, 300.

[270] Ibid., 301. In addition to citing Jeremiah 31:33 to support this view of Second Temple eschatology, Wright references Ezekiel 11:19-20, "I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them…that they may walk in my statutes…and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

[271] Wright, *People of God*, 308. Instrumental biblical texts that informed Second Temple conceptions of the coming Messiah, according to Wright, can be found in Isaiah 11:1-5, "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots…Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins." Lawrence Boadt, similar to Wright, contends that despite the particular differences concerning the specific attributes and tasks of the coming Messiah there is nevertheless a general agreement in first century Judaism that the name "'messiah' is reserved for an expected future king who will deliver the people from their present oppression or misfortune and restore the glory of David's kingdom." Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1984), 532.

humanity's current predicament, namely that they are alienated from God because of sin, and therefore in desperate need of forgiveness. Although Wright's study is important for exposing the broader context of the human situation, a specific understanding of sin and its consequences is imperative for accurately explicating the subject of atonement. Anderson's biblical theology of sin is particularly instructive in this regard since he focuses on the history of sin and how it was understood in the Second Temple period, which in turn influenced the New Testament authors, whose literature was used as a source for later atonement theology.

Anderson's study focuses on the importance of metaphors for discerning how words are to be properly interpreted. This approach is not altogether novel since the work of Paul Ricoeur is a least one thinker, whom Anderson identifies, as breaking new ground in this field of study. Anderson, in his analysis of sin in the Bible, traces the historical metaphors used for this term beginning in the First Temple period then moves to the later strata of prophetic literature during the Second Temple era. This shift will inform the New Testament author's conception of sin and it is the exposure of their hamartiology that is among the primary objectives of Anderson's work.[272]

One of the early metaphors for sin that Anderson traces in Hebrew canon is that of a "stain." This image appears in the Psalms, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight, so that thou art justified in thy sentence and blameless in thy judgment…Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I

[272] Concerning the importance of metaphors in language Anderson writes, "As philosophers of language have come to remind us, metaphors are not merely poetic embellishments. They are part and parcel of everyday speech and as such they structure the way we think, perceive, and act in the world." Gary A. Anderson, "From Israel's Burden to Israel's Debt: Towards a Theology of Sin in Biblical and Early Second Temple Sources," vol. LVIII, in *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*, ed. Florentino García Martínez (Boston: Brill Academic, 2005), 1.

shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. 51:4-7). Another image for sin can be found in Numbers where it is construed as something to "bear." When an Israelite for instance "did not offer the LORD's offering at its appointed time," they were obligated consequently to "bear [their] sin" (Num. 9:13). Sin is occasionally depicted as an "offense" that needs to be "forgiven." This appears in the story of Joseph in Genesis when his brothers send a messenger to "'Say to Joseph, Forgive, I pray you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you'" (Gen. 50:17).

Of these few diverse metaphors for sin used during the First Temple period however, the notion of sin as a "burden" is by comparison the most prevalent.[273] The most common noun for sin in Hebrew, according to Anderson, is *ʼăwōn* and it is usually coupled with the verb *nāśāʼ* which can be interpreted as either "to carry" or "to remove" which are dissimilar translations.[274] Some Bible translators though do not render this idiom literally as "'to carry away (the weight of) a sin,'" rather they translate it to mean either to "wash away'" or to "cover over" sin.[275] Yet the major biblical stories of the First Temple period are more intelligible, and compatible, when sin is understood as a burden or "to carry the weight of sin." Anderson submits that in the context of describing iniquity or sin and its effects, logic dictates, that the term *nāśāʼʼăwōn* should be translated "to bear the burden of one's sin."[276] Examples of sin as a burden appear frequently in canonical writings such as Leviticus 5:1, "If any one sins…he shall bear his iniquity" (5:1) and Leviticus 24:15, "Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin." Other narratives

[273] Anderson (*Sin: A History*, 16-17) notes that the term *nāsāʼ* frequently appears in First Temple books which means "to bear (or bear away) a sin" occuring one hundred and eight times in comparison to the term *sālāh* "to forgive a sin" occurs seventeen times with *kippēr* "to wipe away a sin" occurring on only six occasions.

[274] Ibid.

[275] Ibid.

[276] Anderson states that the term *ʼăwōn* can also be rendered "punishment."

that describe sin as burden can be found in Isaiah 1:4, "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity" and in Isaiah 5:18, "[They] haul sin as though by roped [oxen], and iniquity as with cart ropes."[277] The notion of sin as burden is also found in Ezekiel when the prophet is instructed by God to "lie upon your left side, and I will lay the punishment of the house of Israel upon you" (4:4). Anderson argues that in this passage the "sins of Israel are clearly construed as a burden to be borne."[278] The final example Anderson gives, and perhaps the most significant concerning atonement theology is Israel's ritual *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) in Leviticus when Aaron is instructed,

> Lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and send him away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. The goat shall bear all their iniquities upon him to a solitary land; and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness. (16:21-22)

Anderson in his commentary on this vital passage writes,

> Through this ritual act, Aaron symbolically puts the *weight* of Israel's sins upon the animal. Once the animal has assumed this burden, it can carry out its responsibility…Once God could no longer see [their sin], it as if they ceased to exist. The forgiveness of sins in ancient Israel was not simply a matter of feeling contrite for what one had done wrong; the physical material wrought by sin (its "thingness") had to be removed. [279]

If the idiom *nāśā'ʾăwōn* was consistently translated in its literal form "to carry" rather than arbitrarily exchanging it with the metaphor "to remove," Anderson concludes, this would have made the concept of sin less confusing and the theology of redemption more intelligible. This exegetical move would have also offered greater uniformity to the various canonical books of the First Temple period on this prevalent topic.

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[277] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 22. (Anderson's paraphrase of Isa. 5:18)
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ibid., 22-23. (Anderson's emphasis)

Anderson analysis of the sacrificial system prescribed in Leviticus 16 is informative since it reveals the "ontology" of sin. That is, it supports his notion that sin has "a certain 'thingness,'" and, further, that the "thing…sin has created will continue to haunt the offenders until it has been engaged and dealt with."[280] This chapter in Leviticus is also important for exposing that the "thing" human sin produces requires a "physical" removal, or solution, namely, a scapegoat which carried the "weight" of the nation's sin into the wilderness. God's prescription for the removal of sin in this pericope also reveals that repentance and fasting are insufficient for making satisfactory atonement. Rather, Anderson notes, "the physical material of the sin that had rested on the shoulder of every Israelite must be carted away into oblivion."[281]

A decided shift in metaphors occurs from the First to the Second Temple period, Anderson demonstrates, from sin as a "burden" to that of a "debt."[282] Speaking both Hebrew and Aramaic, Second Temple Judaism was largely bilingual, Anderson states, with the latter dialect having considerable influence on the former particularly regarding

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[280] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 4.

[281] Ibid,, 6. The First Temple conception of sin is predicated on their preconception of original sin that pervades the first book of the Torah, Genesis. Anderson writes, "According to the Bible, the sin of Adam and Eve and all that engendered (banishment from Eden, toiling upon the land, suffering in childbirth, and the return to the soil at death) was a first stage in a progression of general human rebellion. After the Fall we read of Cain's slaying of Abel, the strange tale of intercourse between the 'sons of God and the daughters of men,' the various evils that led to the flood, and finally the building of the Tower of Babel. Humanity was progressively alienating itself from its divine creator." Gary A. Anderson, "*Necessarium Adae Peccatum*: The Problem of Original Sin," in *Sin, Death, and the Devil*, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 24.

[282] Anderson in an endnote cites extracanonical literature (TDOT [vv. 561-62]) which further validates this shift in metaphors, "'Later Judaism, which views the relation to God as a legal and business relation, often applies the metaphor of indebtedness to the ethical and religious relation between man and God…Each indebtedness to the God who has given the Law. In heaven men's acts are entered into an account book…and the final reckoning decides whether the fulfillments of the Law or the transgressions are in the ascendancy. Because the individual is judged by the majority (i.e. of his works)…, man always appears to be in part righteous…and in part guilty…If he keeps a commandment, well with him, for he has…inclined the scale on the side of merit' (t. Qid 1.14)." "It should be noted," furthermore, "that what is said here is true not only for rabbinic Judaism but also for Syriac-speaking Christianity. The crucial variable in this new understanding of sin is not Judaism but, rather, Aramaic idiom." Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 205 (Fn., 1).

their theological vocabulary and the concepts they represent.[283] The enduring effects of the Babylonian exile had a lasting impact on the metaphors used during this period in Jewish history since it explicitly revealed that Israel was "sold into slavery" because they had accumulated debt due "to her great sinfulness." Babylon was the place where Israel paid the currency of their debt, Anderson suggests, and upon repayment, "her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins" (Isa. 40:2). This view is compatible with Wright's notion of exile that "is the result of her own sin," according his interpretation of Jeremiah 31, which is "undone when sin is forgiven."[284] "Physical punishment," Anderson states, "therefore, came to be thought of as means of paying for one's crime."[285] Similarly, if a "sinner committed a serious error and so incurred a 'great debt,' the penalty imposed upon him was thought to 'raise currency' in order to pay down what was owed."[286]

Metaphors used for sin, then, "became distinctly economic, having been influenced by the linguistic, legal, and historical specificities of that era."[287] This is particularly evident, Anderson explains, in their adoption of the term for "debt" in Aramaic is *hôbâ* and used to represent the term "sin" throughout the rabbinic literature of the Second Temple period.[288] Further, the idiom *nāśā'ʾăwōn* formerly translated as "to bear the weight of sin" is now almost unanimously rendered "to assume a debt" (*qabbēl*

[283] The Hebrew dialect underwent a significant transformation from the First to the Second Temple period, according to Anderson, due mainly to the influence of Aramaic language and their related metaphors they adopted through the influence of the Persian empire. Most of the literature of this era reveals an "extensive influence of Aramaic on both vocabulary and syntax." Since there is considerable overlap between Hebrew and Aramaic etymology, the confluence is unsurprising particularly since both dialects were spoken concurrently. Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 27.

[284] Wright, *People of God*, 273.

[285] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 8.

[286] Ibid.

[287] Ibid.

[288] Ibid., 27.

hôbâ) he contends. Since, according to Anderson, there is "complete interchangeability" at this time between "commercial and theological terminology" the change in imagery for sin is predictable.[289] Later, when the various books of the New Testament are written, Anderson notes, "the metaphor of sin as debt was ubiquitous. Jesus frequently told stories about debtors and creditors as a way of illustrating the dynamics of sin and forgiveness. Given that he spoke a form of Hebrew close to that of rabbinic dialect, this is hardly surprising."[290] When comparing, for instance, Jesus' words in Matthew, "forgive us our debts" (6:12) with Luke's "forgive us our sins" (11:4), the Aramaic influence becomes apparent. Luke's rendering of Jesus' prayer would have "struck a Greek speaker as unusual"[291] since it did not appropriate the Aramaic metaphor for sin as "debt" that was existent during the first century. Anderson notes that Matthew's version therefore is by comparison the more "literal translation" because it is truer to the Hebrew and Aramaic idiom and therefore the more accurate rendering of Jesus' original words.

This juridical and economic language and their corresponding principles in terms of debt, repayment, and punishment regarding sin was later subsumed by theologians of the Middle Ages whose practices of "catalog 'prices' (i.e. various penances) for people's misdeeds"[292] are then defended by Anderson. Criticism of medieval theologians for mixing secular legal and economic language with theological conceptions of sin as debt is unjustified since these metaphors can be traced to the Aramaic text of Persian Empire. Their juridical and economic imagery is appropriated in various New Testament books within the context of their discussion on sin such as Paul in Romans who regards it as a

[289] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 29.
[290] Ibid., 31.
[291] Ibid.
[292] Ibid.

violation the "law" (3:20), and that "judgment" will lead to condemnation (5:16) and "acquittal" coming from God alone (5:18). The Second Temple conception of sin as debt in the New Testament would also be reinforced by later rabbinic Judaism when sin was understood as incurring a "cost" that the "sinner" is "obligated" to repay.[293]

The metaphor of sin as debt in the New Testament is not therefore a nascent construct but a familiar image that appears in existent Hebrew and Aramaic idioms present during this era according to Anderson who writes, "In first century Palestine, the word used in commercial contexts to identify debt became in religious contexts the most common word sin."[294] The parable in Matt. 18:23-27 demonstrates that the change in metaphorical language in the canon from Leviticus during the First Temple period to the time of the Second Temple era becomes absolute and "one will rarely find, either in the New Testament or in contemporary Jewish texts, any free usage of the earlier metaphor of sin as weight."[295] This parable, concerning the Unforgiving Servant, also functions as a commentary on the comparison of "sin" to "debt" in Lord's Prayer of Matt. 6:12,

> The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. (18:23-27).

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[293] Baruch Schwartz, "Term or Metaphor: Biblical *nōśē' 'ăwōn/peša'/het'"* [in Hebrew] *Tarbiz* 63 (1994): 149-171. (From Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 8.)

[294] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 7. Anderson notes that the idea of sin as burden "will persist in the form of textual citation and allusion" during the Second Temple era yet they were "unbound by the legacy of the past" since the metaphor of sin as debt would eventually be its replacement. This gradual shift is analogues to the contemporary idiom "thou art," Anderson suggests, which no longer occurs "in our everyday speech, yet they are retained in common prayers or hymns such as 'How Great Thou Art'."

[295] Ibid.

Jesus' allegory supports the notion of sin as a debt in Matt. 6:12 and further that sin is an ontological reality that requires concrete repayment. Anderson on this parable writes,

> All one has to do is think of the monetary debts owed the king figuratively, as sins. The parable begins with the king closing the books on one's servant's account, which is in arrears by some ten thousand talents. Because the slave does not have the means to repay this sum, the king gives orders that he, his wife, and his children, along with everything he owns, be sold to raise currency to pay the debt. Only when the slave gets on his knees and begs the king to show mercy does he relent and remit the enormous debt. If a person was not able to cover his debts, however, he was sold as a debt-slave, and the punishment he underwent constituted his payment on the debt. Jesus therefore taught his disciples to pray "Forgive us our debts" so that they might avoid a fate as a debt-slave. But apart from an act of divine mercy, one will have to pay for a misdeed with a form of currency generated by physical punishment.[296]

In addition to revealing the clear shift in metaphors for sin from burden to debt, this parable also discloses the necessary characteristics of the "solution" to this "problem," according to Anderson, namely, that "physical punishment" is required to generate the currency needed to make satisfactory recompense.

2.2.1. Debt and Almsgiving

Another development that Anderson studies, which occurs in the Second Temple era, is the idea of "merit" as a way of building a "treasury" in heaven.[297] The conception of accumulating credit during this period is the logical outcome of understanding of sin as debt. This idea appears in apocryphal passages such as Tobit 4:9, "[lay] up a good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity," which suggests that "human virtue" such as almsgiving has prospective value since it can be used to pay-down debt accrued because of sin. There is, then, a clear dialectical relationship between sin as debt and almsgiving as credit in Second Temple literature. The antonym of *hôb* (debt) is *zekût*

[296] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 7.
[297] Ibid., 9.

(credit), Anderson explains, and in texts of this period "moral virtuosity" made a deposit in the "heavenly bank."[298] This is an important metaphor, Anderson suggests, for demonstrating how sin's "thingness" can be remitted through means that are concrete.

The conception of debt and credit is unlike the First Temple metaphor of sin as "burden" which lacks an antonym and therefore complicates the theological notion of remission. This development was "revolutionary," Anderson contends, since for the "first time, Jewish thinkers had a vocabulary that could describe moral virtues in a meritorious way. Human beings, by their good works, could store up credit that could preserve them in times of trouble."[299] Second Temple passages that illustrate this conception in addition to those in Tobit can be found in Daniel who, speaking to king Nebuchadnezzar, proclaims, "'break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your tranquility'" (4:27). Humanity can then be redeemed from their status as a "debt-slave" to God through almsgiving which was the preferable to punishment which was customarily used as a method of payment.[300] Merit, then, counteracts the "ravages of sin" and can be supported in canonical literature such as the book of Exodus when Moses drew upon the credit in accumulated heaven by "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" so that God would not punish Israel for her sin (32:13).[301]

There are many critics of using financial metaphors to describe these theological conceptions because of their mistaken portrayal of God's qualities. Anderson writes,

> One might assume that one's sins and deeds of virtue were simply a set of entries on a ledger sheet. God is nothing more than a meticulous accountant whose sole

[298] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 9.
[299] Ibid.
[300] Ibid., 10.
[301] Ibid.

> task is to keep the heavenly books in balance. Nothing is further from the truth. Acts of human generosity funded a treasury that did not play by the rules of zero-sum economy. Giving alms was like being an initial investor in a company that would eventually rise to the top of the market. The returns one could expect form such an investment would be beyond calculation. God has 'gamed' the system to the advantage of the faithful."[302]

Second Temple Judaism's notion of merit would appear in New Testament writings such as Mark, when Jesus implores those of wealth to, "sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (10:21). This passage is clearly evocative of Tobit 4:9-10, "So you will be laying up a good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity. For charity delivers from death and keeps you from entering the darkness" which underlines the "importance of human agency for the forgiveness of sins" which "became paradigmatic in the early church."[303] Jesus' admonition in Luke is also indicative of this theme, "give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys" (12:33). Anderson notes that almsgiving though does not procure salvation which comes through the cross that "canceled the bond of indebtedness" (Col. 2:14).[304]

This practice reflects "faith in action" and is an ideal way for the baptized to accumulate wealth in God's kingdom. Protestantism, however, ended this practice since the "principal worry of the various Reformers was that almsgiving was a human work and compromised the notion that salvation was due to grace alone (*sola gratia*)."[305] "Yet," Anderson states, "a careful reading of early Christian sources reveals that the

[302] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 13.
[303] Ibid., 12.
[304] Ibid.
[305] Ibid., 13.

problem of human agency in the giving of alms in not so easily parsed."[306] If God keeps "a record of what one owes" it is reasonable to assume that "there must be a corresponding ledger sheet that documents what one owns. Because the giving of alms was thought to fund a treasury in heaven, it was altogether natural to presume that these monies might be able to pay down the debts occasioned by sin."[307] The notion of almsgiving is a "long-revered practice," Anderson suggests, and is found throughout the Hebrew canon but with the shift in metaphors from sin as a burden to a debt this practice received "higher prestige."[308] Further, Anderson writes, "What had once been simply a single command among others rose to being a command that epitomized one's entire relationship toward God."[309]

2.2.2. Debt and Satisfaction

As Anderson argues, there were two alternatives, then, for repaying accumulated debt because of sin in God's economy: almsgiving or punishment. Economic and juridical terminology such as "redemption" and "satisfaction of debts" naturally began to emerge during this Second Temple era which, according to Anderson, paves the way for subsequent reflections on atonement theology. This new ethos, Anderson notes, is primarily attributed to first century Judaism's reflection on the Babylonian captivity. Israel served seventy years of punishment for their sin and was eventually redeemed by God through Cyrus, king of Persia. This event shaped the Jewish nation's perception of debt and consequent redemption as articulate by the prophet Isaiah, "*Comfort, oh comfort*

[306] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 13.
[307] Ibid.
[308] Ibid., 14.
[309] Ibid.

My people, Says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and declare to her that her term of service is over, that [the debt owed for] her iniquity has been satisfied; For she has received as the hand of the LORD Double for all her sins."[310]

The conception of sin as debt and satisfaction through punishment are all made explicit in this vital passage from Isaiah and in addition to informing Second Temple thought, it significantly influenced the New Testament writers. Israel's situation, expressed by Isaiah, according to Anderson, due to her sin and subsequent redemption after their punishment is evocative of the nation's captivity in Egypt. This conception then unites the two most important events of the First and Second Temple periods which brings cohesion to Hebrew canon on the theological subject of salvation and creates a typology for first century Judaism's worldview. Anderson highlights the "several colorful expressions" that "come into greater clarity" in Isaiah's text such as Israel's "term of service is over," that she justifiably "received double for all her sins," and further that "her debt has been satisfied" because she was punished for seventy years.[311]

Satisfaction of one's debt before God is vital to Second Temple thought since it suggest that a future claim cannot be made because of her sin offering them closure on the previous transgressions they have committed. Making payment through corporeal suffering is superior to the sacrificial system that was traditionally used to make atonement, according to Anderson, because it involves the "price" of a human "body" rather than animal that has been purchased. The book of Job affirms this perspective since it testifies that "one's physical well-being is one of life's highest values: 'Skin for

[310] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 46. (Anderson's translation, emphasis, and parenthetical insertion of Isa. 40:1-2)

[311] Ibid., 4.

sin, all that a man possesses he will give on account of his life' (2:4)."[312] This passage for Job suggests that physical punishment leaves an indelible impression on humanity that often continues through several generations in comparison to an animal that has been sacrificed that is a disinterested third-party to the transaction.

Similar to the criticism of the idea of God's "ledger sheet" in heaven, this interpretation of Isaiah's text also appears to portray God as a "small minded accountant" and further that his "relationship to Israel is somewhat vindictive."[313] But, Anderson contends, "Human sins have consequences. When individuals disobey moral law, a tangible form of evil is created in the world that must be accounted for. And this is even more true when a whole society goes astray."[314] Judgment is indicative of God's justice and this divine attribute appears with regularity throughout Scripture. Yet God's grace is equally apparent throughout the Bible since the punishment for sin is "not infinite." Anderson notes that prophets like "Second Isaiah can [therefore] speak his words of comfort because the term of punishment that God has permitted Israel to suffer has come to a close. 'Her debt has been satisfied; she has received double for all her sins.'"[315]

Many Protestants have criticized the sin-debt metaphor, posited in Rabbinic literature, which suggests that "God sits in heaven with his account books open and scrutinizes every human action with an eye toward properly recording it as either a debit or a credit" since it infers that there is "little room for the merciful side of the Godhead to emerge."[316] This objection is based principally on the desire to preserve the salvific work of the cross since it has been replaced by a model of "self-redemption" through either

[312] Anderson, *Sin: A History*., 53. (Anderson's interpretation of Job 2:4)
[313] Ibid., 54.
[314] Ibid.
[315] Ibid.
[316] Ibid., 105.

almsgiving or corporeal punishment. Anderson argues though, that this ledger-like accounting is demonstrative of God's grace since God is not adverse to "cooking the books," or wiping away debt with insufficient credit if the end result falls to the favor of the nation Israel he loved so dearly."[317]

Anderson concludes that the study of Semitic texts therefore is essential for understanding how these works informed New Testament thought, particularly their conception of sin and forgiveness and the metaphors behind them. Studying Jesus' words from the Greek texts alone therefore can be "problematic" since it is "one step removed" from his native tongue which is a mixture or Hebrew and Aramaic.[318] In addition to key passages such as the Our Father in Matthew 6:12, "And forgive us our debts, As we also have forgiven our debtors" which clearly reflect the influence of Semitic idioms, stories such as the "woman of the city" whose sin-debt is forgiven by Jesus in Luke 7:36-50 are also important for revealing the primacy of reading these texts through a Hebrew/Aramaic lens compared to interpreting them through the Greek vernacular. Jesus' short parable within the pericope of Luke 7 reveals the Semitic connotations, "'A certain creditor [*mārē' hawbâ*] had two debtors [*hayyābē*]; one owed [*hayyāb*] five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay [*pra'*], he canceled [*šbaq*] the debts of both of them.'"[319] When employing the Hebrew/Aramaic idioms in the

[317] Anderson, *Sin: A History*,106. Anderson notes this seemingly abrogation of justice is misguided since it is supported by that later Christian theologians such as Thomas Aquinas who remarked that "such generosity does not offend against justice. Just as the person who owes one hundred dollars is free to pay two hundred, so the person who is owed a hundred dollars can refuse to collect anything. In forgiving debt, the creditor is in a sense making a gift of it–and God is always free to make a gift." Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 108.

[318] Ibid., 111.

[319] Ibid.,112. (Anderson's interpretation of Luke 7:41-42) Anderson (*Sin: A History*, 113) cites the work of "Ephrem the Syrian" whose patristic atonement theology was predicated on this passage in Luke. Ephrem is regarded as a "towering figure of the Syriac church" who was thoroughly familiar with these Semitic idioms regarding sin as accumulated debt and remission of the "bond" it has created. Ephrem

preceding text, Anderson contends, passages such as this in Luke 7 appear "less contrived" and accordingly more credible and intelligible.

This hermeneutic is particularly significant when interpreting one of the most important passages in the New Testament, Colossians 2:13-15. This text, according to Anderson, "was central to early Christianity and may be the most cited New Testament passage on the subject of the atonement. It reads, 'And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he *cancelled* [*charizo*] *the debt of all our trespasses, erasing the bond of indebtedness* [*cheirographon*] that stood against us with its legal demands. He set it aside, nailing it to the cross."[320] The commercial metaphors endemic in Second Temple conceptions of sin such as debt cancellation and bond remission are all present in this passage which will support subsequent theologies of the cross. Anderson concludes that Semitic idioms which support the "biblical metaphor of sin as debt" therefore should be considered "a basic building block for a doctrine of atonement."[321]

2.3. Christian Anthropology in New Testament Theology: The Work of Frank J. Matera

Anderson's biblical theology of sin is consonant with New Testament anthropology prior to salvation that is disclosed, according to Matera, throughout its narrative. These topics correspond to theological categories of "Christian anthropology" and "soteriology" that comprise the first theme, "humanity in need of salvation," of

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"spoke the same language as his rabbinic brethren" and his work was highly influential in both the Catholic and Orthodox Church's development of their theology of the cross.

[320] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 114. (Anderson's emphasis, parenthetical insertion, and translation of Col. 2:13-15)

[321] Ibid., 202.

Matera's five-part thematic structure.[322] Matera deduces these themes, which formulate his "master story," through his study of New Testament theology that is considered, sequentially, underneath four headings: Synoptic tradition, Pauline tradition, Johannine tradition, and Other Voices.[323] Christian anthropology, marked by sin, and soteriology, or salvation effected through the death of Christ, however play the primary role in the biblical narrative, according to Matera, who notes that "there is a constant witness in the New Testament that God sent Christ to free, liberate, redeem, and save humanity from a predicament of sin and slavery to powers beyond its control."[324] This is particularly evident in the books of the Synoptic tradition whose starting point is the kingdom of God which reveal, collectively, that "the salvation the kingdom brings exposes the true state of the human condition."[325] Further, that "apart from the kingdom, people find themselves alienated from God and in profound need of forgiveness."[326] The first theme is essential since to misconstrue New Testament anthropology and soteriology the remaining themes will be obscure. That is, to fully understand the solution, or the cross, a firm grasp of the problem, human sin, is required.

2.3.1. The Synoptic Tradition on the Problem of Sin

[322] The categories of "Christian anthropology" and "soteriology" coincide, respectively, with the topics of chapters two and three of this project that considers the "problem of sin" and the "forgiveness of sin."

[323] The "Other Voices" in Matera's study are comprised of the books of Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation.

[324] Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Christology*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 252.

[325] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 429.

[326] Ibid. G.C. Burkouwer in his study of sin further notes, "The Word of God sees sin as something radical and total, and regards it as a missing of the mark, apostasy, transgression, lovelessness, lawlessness, and an alienation from the life of God. In short, it is man's sin as a denigration of God's glory." G.C. Burkouwer, *Studies in Dogmatics: Sin*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1971), 285.

Matera begins his study of the Synoptic tradition with the Gospel of Mark which discloses "the need for people to repent," which is a subject that "is central to his narrative."[327] The story of John the Baptist is described in the opening verses of Mark who is "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (1:4). Sin characterizes the human condition in Mark, and its universality is intimated by his statement that "all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem" were "confessing their sins" and seeking forgiveness. After John's arrest, Jesus continues this call for all people to repent which inaugurates his ministry and defines his mission. The first words Jesus speaks in Mark is for people to "repent, and believe in the gospel" (1:15) which infers the pervasiveness of human sin. Later in Mark's narrative, this charge is given to Jesus' disciples who are to continue the mission of John and Jesus preaching "that men should repent" (6:12). What repentance is though must be viewed within the wider context of Mark's narrative since, for the disciples, it involves leaving behind their former way of life which includes their occupation as fisherman and their families for the kingdom's sake. Cowardice (4:40), misapprehension of the gospel message (8:21), faithlessness (9:19), self-aggrandizement (9:34; 10:37), and disloyalty (14:50) are all symptomatic of their former way of life and further define the human condition prior to repentance and salvation. Their situation is contrasted by Jesus' constructive disposition which is marked by obedience to God's will, and serves the dual function of providing a model of right ethical conduct and exposing the sinful behavior of humanity. Repentance, then, "means aligning one's point of view with God's point of view manifested in the ministry of Jesus."[328]

[327] Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 21.
[328] Ibid., 22.

Yet humanity's obstinacy toward this "good news" is recurring theme in Mark as evidenced in Jesus' parables. While most scholars contend that "Jesus speaks in parables so that the crowd will not be converted,"[329] Matera construes them, "to mean that the crowd does not want to see or hear lest they find it necessary to repent."[330] Further, Matera writes,

> the numerous healings and exorcisms that Jesus performs suggest that humanity has failed to submit to God' rule and this its history has gone astray. Humanity has fallen under the power of Satan…humanity has been trapped in a predicament from which it cannot extricate itself unless God manifests his rule in a new and decisive manner.[331]

Admittance into the kingdom of God which, according to Matera is the starting point of the Synoptic tradition, though, is accessed only through repentance of sin and belief in the gospel "that Jesus announces" (1:15).[332] Matera notes,

> the salvation the kingdom brings exposes the true state of the human condition. Apart from the kingdom, people find themselves alienated from God and in profound need of forgiveness. Having rebelled against God's rule, they have allowed Satan to rule over their lives. Israel, then, needs to be reformed and restored if it is to enter into the sphere of God's rule, and the Gentiles must turn from idols to the living and true God. [333]

Important to Matera's study of Mark is that the realization of one's sin and their subsequent repentance is antecedent to receiving the gospel and therefore a necessary prerequisite for salvation and entering God's kingdom. That is, salvation, offered through

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[329] Mark 4:11-12, "And he said to them, 'To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables; so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand; lest they should turn again, and be forgiven.'"

[330] Humanity's disinclination toward the gospel message is evident in Jesus' parables in Mark. While most scholars contend that "Jesus speaks in parables so that the crowd will not be converted," evident in Mark 4:11-12, "And [Jesus] said to them, 'To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables; so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand; lest they should turn again, and be forgiven,'" Matera understands them "to mean that the crowd does not want to see or hear lest they find it necessary to repent." Matera, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 263 (fn., 26).

[331] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 13.

[332] Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 21.

[333] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 429.

the reception of the gospel is only intelligible or relevant in light of understanding the human situation that is characterized by sin.

In her analysis of the topic of sin in Mark, Paula Fredriksen likewise underscores the centrality of the theme of repentance. Fredriksen notes the significance of John the Baptist who "called out for repentance" and his "immersion" of people "in the Jordan 'for the forgiveness of sins."[334] Together with Jesus' subsequent call for people to repent of their sin at the onset of Mark's narrative establishes the trajectory and rational for the gospel message to follow. "Sin" in Mark, according to Fredriksen, is defined as "a breaking of God's commandments" with repentance, then, understood as "(re)turning to this covenant."[335] The consequences of sin is grievous in Mark since "it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea" (9:43) than for anyone who causes a young child who believes in Jesus to sin. Further, in Mark, Jesus tells his disciples,

> And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched (9:44-48).

The "threat of God's burning anger toward sinners, and the harshness of coming judgment" is emphasized by Jesus, like John the Baptist before him, to highlight the gravity of the human condition encumbered by sin and the eschatological consequences of their current predicament "to spur [his] listeners to repentance."[336] Humanity therefore

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[334] Paula Fredriksen, *Sin: The Early History of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 16.

[335] Ibid.

[336] Ibid.

is called to repentance and receive baptism at both the beginning (1:4) and end of Mark's Gospel (16:16) which is the only way to salvation, and avoid condemnation that is the consequence of human sin.

The human condition in Mark is also highlighted by Paul Achtemeier who notes that there is "woven into Mark's narrative a running commentary on the futility of human goodness in the face of the divine righteousness to be found in Jesus."[337] In this Gospel, Achtemeier states, "human pretensions are unmasked, sin is shown for the destructive force it is, and the impossibility of any recourse but grace is made evident."[338] Within the "religious sphere" of Mark's narrative, in pericopes like Mark 3:6 for instance, Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath which exposes the fraudulency of the "goodness" of the religious leaders. Their response is not to give glory to God but rather they "went out, and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him." The irony in this story is underscored by Achtemeier since "the actions of the very people charged with upholding and defending that law, show they are willing to approve and do exactly what the law forbids. And in the name of that very law!"[339] In the "political sphere" revealed in passages like Mark 15, Pilate releases Barabbas a noted political insurrectionist, instead of Jesus whom he knew to be innocent of spurious charges against him. "Justice" in this narrative therefore is not served but denied and in the end political expediency on the part of Rome triumphed. In Mark's view, Achtemeier notes, "such is the inevitable result when human pretensions to goodness confront God

[337] Paul J. Achtemeier, "Jesus and the Human Condition in Mark's Gospel: Divine Grace and the Shattering of Human Illusions," in *Unity and Diversity in the Gospels and Paul: Essays in Honor of Frank J. Matera*, eds. Christopher W. Skinner and Kelly R. Iverson, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 95. Achtemeier's work is commended by Matera in his book *New Testament Christology*.

[338] Ibid.

[339] Ibid., 97.

himself: human pretensions to goodness are unveiled as the illusions they are. Roman 'justice' had here accomplished the very purpose it had set out to avoid: release the guilty and punishment of the innocent."[340] Achtemeier concludes that "[the] shattering of [human illusions] comes through the realization that not only evil, but humanity's very goodness stands opposed to God—the Jews wanted Jesus killed to preserve the sanctity of God's law, a noble ideal; the Romans killed Jesus to preserve peace, a noble gesture" yet these supposed righteous deeds are in fact in direct opposition to God.[341] The human predicament in Mark, then, is perilous because of sin which is compounded by the futility of "righteous" actions before a holy God. Forgiveness therefore must come from a source beyond humanity

In Matthew's Gospel, the Christological title "Emmanuel," or "God with us," (Matt. 1:23) defines the mission of Jesus which, according to Matera, "is to save his people from their sins."[342] Similar to Mark, the theme of repentance appears in the opening of Matthew when John the Baptist's admonishes all people to "[repent], for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (3:2). Jesus likewise subsumes this message which calls people to repent "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (4:17). Distinct from Mark, though, is Matthew's concern for proper ethical conduct. The human condition is therefore defined by inference, meaning, the quantity of ethical precepts suggests Matthew's negative anthropology. Humanity by nature is rebellious against God's will and this precludes them from the kingdom of heaven that Jesus preaches. Doing the will of God involves fidelity to the Law, and it is humanity's natural aversion to God's

[340] Achtemeier, *Jesus and the Human Condition*, 102.
[341] Ibid., 106.
[342] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 29.

commandments that best delineates Jesus' conception of sin.[343] Jesus' Sermon on the Mount further accentuates the dire status of the human condition. For instance, humanity is shown that all are violators of the seventh commandment's even if they do not commit overt acts of adultery since "every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (5:28). Jesus' sermon renders therefore renders the impoverished human condition worse. Fredriksen writes,

> "Do not kill"; Matthew's Jesus teaches that anyone who is even angry will be subject to judgment, "and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire" (5.21-22). The law said, "No adultery"; Jesus warns against even feeling lust: better to pluck out *one's eye or cut off one's hand than to sin in this way and be* thrown entirely into hell (5.27-30). The law, in condemning false swearing, permits swearing in principle; Jesus absolutely forbids it (5.31-37). Murder, adultery, and lying, all forbidden by the law were sins. Whoever avoided even anger, as Matthew's Jesus teaches, or lust "in the heart" or swearing, would never contravene the law and so would not sin.[344]

Far from retracting or attenuating God's laws, Jesus in this sermon intensifies them by making adherence to them impossible.[345] Jesus' explication of the human condition in this short narrative serves the twofold function of accentuating humanity's sinful nature and underscoring their futility of entering the kingdom apart from God's grace.

In the Gospel of Luke, though the call to repentance from John the Baptist and Jesus which inaugurates the kingdom of God is absent in his introductory chapters, the theme of repentance nevertheless plays by comparison a more significant role throughout his narrative. Terminologies such as "returning," "conversion," or having a "change of heart" are strewn throughout his work which suggests the centrality of this theme in his

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[343] Fredriksen, *Sin: The Early History of an Idea*, 14.

[344] Ibid., 16. (Fredriksen's emphasis)

[345] Fredriksen highlights the work of E. P. Sanders who, in his commentary on Jesus' sermon, notes, "This section of Matthew has often been cited as showing Jesus' 'opposition' to the law. But heightening the law is not opposing it…If intensification were against the law, then the main pious groups of Judaism, the Pharisees and the Essenes, were systematic breakers of the law." E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 212.

writings. "Sins" in Luke, similar to Matthew, are construed as "*concrete failures in one's conduct in the realm of ethics and morality*."[346] This is evident in Luke's renowned parables such as the Prodigal Son whose contrite reflection, "I have sinned against heaven and before you" (15:18), follows the personal introspection of his immoral behavior. Also, the story of the "woman of the city" who was a notorious "sinner" and through her repentance has her debt of sin forgiven (7:36-50).[347] Other short narratives peculiar to Luke that call attention to the problem of sin, is the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector which contrasts God's detestation of the self-justified with the truly apologetic "sinner" respectively (18:9-14). The criminal crucified with Jesus because of his "deeds" receives forgiveness upon repenting of his past immoral behavior (23:39-43) and continues this narrative in Luke. All of these short stories and parables are important for revealing the endemic nature of sin and humanity's corresponding need of repentance, and salvation.[348]

The basic premise of Jesus' ministry in Luke is to call "sinners to repentance" (5:32). The unrepentant are regarded as "sick" in this Gospel and in need of a "physician" (5:31). Sin, sickness, and "the oppression of evil spirits" therefore are all indicative of the human condition.[349] I. Howard Marshall, whose New Testament theology contributes to Matera's master story, notes that Luke "shares the common New Testament understanding that the people of God have by and large fallen away from him and constituted themselves sinners" therefore the "characteristic expression of sin" is their

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[346] Udo Schnelle, *The Theology of the New Testament*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 499. (Schnelle's emphasis)

[347] Anderson (*Sin: A History*, 112-113) notes that this story in Luke which reinforces the notion of sin as debt in the New Testament was for patristic fathers like "St. Ephrem (d. 373)…basic to his whole theology of atonement."

[348] Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 71.

[349] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 70.

unresponsiveness to the call of God to return to him through Jesus' ministry. [350] Jesus' warnings against such cities as Chorazin and Bethsaida in Luke reveal the eschatological consequences of this apathetic attitude toward God and their reluctance to repent of their sin. Consequently, these cities can expect harsher treatment on the day that God judges the nations (10:13-14). In Luke 11, Jesus' issues a similar warning against the current "evil generation" since they also lack they aspiration to repent (11:29-32). Though God's judgment against the unrepentant is severe, the "repentance of a single sinner" is described as brining "joy in heaven" and compared to finding a lost sheep (15:6), a lost coin (15:9), or a lost son (15:20).[351] Jesus' final words in Luke that "repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (24:47) are similar to those in Mark and Matthew and further demonstrates the importance and prevalence of this theme throughout the Synoptic writings.

The Acts of the Apostles, the second volume of Luke's dual compendium, continues the anthropology of his Gospel by characterizing humanity as a "crooked generation" because of sin (2:40).[352] Highlighting humanity's incapacity to remain faithful to the Mosaic Law (13:39), like the other Synoptic literature, humanity, accordingly, "is in profound need of forgiveness, without which it cannot enter into the new life" promised in God's coming kingdom.[353] The Synoptic's theme of Jesus' commission at the end of the Gospels "finds its completion" in Acts which depicts the apostles admonishing sinners to repent (2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20) and turn from

[350] I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 2004), 142-143.

[351] Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 70.

[352] Matera includes the Acts of the Apostles within the Synoptic tradition referring to "Luke-Acts" as a "unified work."

[353] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 430.

their former way of life. The theme of repentance emerges in the early church that was initiated by John the Baptist at the opening of the Gospels. The early Christian community then assumes this mission at the behest of Jesus and is described as responding to this call. The first words of Peter, in the new era, like Jesus before him, calls Israel to repentance in his famous discourse on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and again a chapter later when he addresses "the men of Israel" whom he instructs to "turn again, that your sins may be blotted out" (3:19). The apostles witness to Jesus' ministry, when interrogated by Jewish officials, that he came to "give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (5:31). Luke throughout Acts "presents God as offering Israel a second opportunity through the preaching of the apostles to repent and receive the forgiveness of sins."[354] Yet Israel is adverse to this "good news" as illustrated in Stephen's discourse in front of the council, when he refers to the Jewish authorities as a "stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears" who "always resist the Holy Spirit" and whose forefathers persecuted the prophets of God and "killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One." (7:51-52). The rejection of the gospel by Israel is paradigmatic of the human condition in general who by nature refuses this message of salvation. This conclusion is affirmed by Frank Thielman, another contributor to Matera's master story, who writes, "The Jew's rejection of God's word, whether it came through his prophets or his Son, is only one manifestation of a rebellion against God that has permeated humanity from the beginning."[355]

The Gentile community in Acts therefore is construed as equally guilty of sin and they are likewise called to turn away from worldly desires and toward God (14:15).

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[354] Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 72.

[355] Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: a canonical and synthetic approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 683.

Paul's Areopagus speech underscores this theme when he states, "[the] times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness" (17:30-31). Paul in this discourse is fulfilling the commission that he received on the Damascus road by Jesus who sent him to "open the eyes" of the Gentiles that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins'" (26:17-18). Paul therefore is continuing the mission of John the Baptist, Jesus, and later Peter and the other apostles who were instructed by Jesus to preach the gospel by first calling them to repentance. The book of Acts typifies the human predicament in the Synoptic tradition that is characterized as being held captive "through demon possession or illness or sin."[356] This accentuates their need of the "good news" that Jesus preached and that the apostles later disseminated. Matera concludes,

> People embrace the gospel because it responds to a profound need in their lives. It promises healing, forgiveness, deliverance from evil, reconciliation with God, and salvation from death itself…those who experience this salvation begin to comprehend the predicament in which they find themselves apart from the gospel. They are conscious of the power of sin and their former alienation from God. They understand that what they once thought was true was a lie. Now that they dwell in the light, they realize that they had been living in darkness. Whether proclaimed by Jesus or by the early church, the gospel unmasks the human condition." [357]

In addition to sharing a common anthropology, the Synoptic literature reveals that a sufficient understanding of the problem of human sin, evident in the call for people to repent then believe the gospel, is a necessary prerequisite to being reconciled to God, and for making the gospel they preach comprehendible.

[356] Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 194.
[357] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 428.

2.3.2. The Pauline Tradition on the Problem of Sin

The characterization of the human condition in Synoptic tradition, marked by sin and rebellion against God, finds its ultimate expression in the Pauline tradition. In Romans 3 for example, "all men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin" (vv. 9-10) and humanity cannot extricate themselves from their current separation from God. Among the thirteen letters of in this tradition, Paul's epistle to the Romans offers the most "'detailed analysis' of the human condition and the foremost developed theology of sin offered the New Testament."[358] Matera offers a synopsis of Paul's anthropology,

> Previous to the appearance of Christ, humanity was under the power of sin, which frustrated humanity's efforts to do God's will as expressed in the law. Sin entered the world through Adam's transgression of God's commandment, and with sin came death. The power of sin was especially apparent in the Gentile world, which worshipped the creature rather than the Creator. As a result of this idolatry, the Gentile world found itself in a sinful predicament from which it could not extricate itself (1:18-32). Although Jewish people had the advantage of knowing God's will because God had graciously given them the gift of Torah, they also transgressed God's commandments (2:1-29). In Paul's view, [then,] all are under the power of sin (3:9)."[359]

Similar to the Synoptic tradition, the human predicament is dire according to Paul since humanity is not only "enslaved to the power of sin" but coincidently "under God's judgment, threatened with death, which brings eternal separation from God."[360]

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[358] Frank J. Matera, *God's Saving Grace: A Pauline Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), 93. The Pauline tradition, for Matera, is comprised of the thirteen following New Testament letters (which include the "pseudo-Pauline" works): Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 99. Paul's anthropology in Romans is essential to Matera's first theme, "humanity in need of salvation," since of the one hundred and seventy three occurrences of the term "sin" in the New Testament (in its singular form [ἁμαρτία]), fifty nine are in the undisputed Pauline letters and of these occurrences forty eight are found in Romans. The term sin appears once in Thessalonians, four times in 1 Corinthians, three times in 2 Corinthians, three times in Galatians. Schnelle, *The Theology of the New Testament*, 286.

[359] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 431.

[360] Ibid., 432.

Terminology such as "flesh" often functions as a synonym for "sin" throughout Paul's epistles and is employed both pejoratively to connote the human condition and antithetically to contrast the "spirit" which is divine. "Sinfulness" exemplifies Paul's view of humanity which is "fully developed" in the first three chapters of Romans.[361] In chapter one, Paul convicts the Gentile world of sin by listing a cadre of vices which includes "envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity" and refers to them as "[gossipers], slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, [and] ruthless" (1:29-31). Although Gentiles "know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them" (1:32). Their disobedience and idolatry dishonor's God who gives them over to the "dishonorable passions" of their heart which leads to their eternal demise. Matera writes,

> For having worshiped the creature rather than the Creator, humanity finds itself in a situation in which it must live with the consequences of its own behavior. Consequently, sin becomes the punishment of sin, and leads to the revelation of God's wrath. More frightful still, this sinful situation is a predicament from which humanity cannot extricate itself because, having forsaken the glory of God for the glory of the creature, humanity confuses good with evil and evil with good, for it exchanged the order of creation for the disorder of sin.[362]

Israel is likewise implicated Romans 2 but, unlike the Gentiles, have God's law which only increases their culpability and consequently the severity of impending judgment. In Romans 3, Paul juxtaposes these two categories of people, and concludes that because of their disobedience "all men both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin," and, further, that "none is righteous, no, not one; no one understands, no one seeks for God. All have turned aside, together they have gone wrong; no one does good, not even one"

[361] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 111.
[362] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 173.

(3:9-12). Since "[all] people, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin," sin then "defines the human condition in Paul" according to Fredriksen. Moreover, sin's effects are not limited to the human realm but its "scope is universal…[because] it permeates the cosmos."[363] In Paul, then, the entire world is affected by sin and in need of redemption.

The human predicament is consequent of the original sin of Adam in Romans which is a concept that is instrumental to Paul's anthropology. In Romans 5, Paul writes, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (v. 12). Matera offers a succinct summary on Paul's position on original sin, "Adam transgressed God's commandment, thereby introducing the power of sin into the world. As a result of sin, death (understood as separation from God as well as physical destruction) entered the world and spread to all human beings who sinned *as a result* of Adam's transgression."[364] This position is reiterated later when Paul writes, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (v. 19) which suggests that "there is a relationship between the transgression of the first human being and humanity's transgression…Not only is Adam the first human being but he stands at the origin of a sinful history that all other human beings have ratified as a consequence of Adam's transgression."[365] Since all humanity has descendent from Adam he is considered the "progenitor" of "sinful humanity" and with sin death

[363] Fredriksen, *Sin: The Early History of an Idea*, 33, 39.

[364] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 113. (Matera's emphasis) The purpose of this emphasis is that there has been some controversy surrounding the term "because" or ("as a result") in the various Bible versions of this passage; Matera writes, "While the New Revised Standard Version translates *eph hō* as 'because,' thereby implying that death spread to other human beings because they sinned after the pattern of Adam, Joseph Fitzmyer suggests that a better translation is 'with the result that.' Thus the phrase points to *the result of Adams's sin* as well as to the personal responsibility that human beings bear for their sinful actions." (Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, vol. 33, *The Anchor Bible: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Bantam, Doubleday, Dell Publishing, 1993), 416. (From Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 113) Matera agrees with Fitzmyer's position in this translation which explains the emphasis. In a footnote Matera states "The Vulgate reading, *in quo omnes* ("in whom all") suggests that all humanity sinned in the person of Adam." Ibid., 273 (fn. 43).

[365] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 113.

entered the world. Yet death implies more than "physical destruction of the body, death is eternal separation from God. Death is in the service of sin because sin's ultimate goal is to separate the creature from the Creator. This is why the wage that sin pays to those in its service is death (6:23)."[366] The result of Adams' sin is both ubiquitous and devastating. Matera describes it in three ways, "First, as a result of his trespass, many died (5:15). Second, the judgment following [Adam's] trespass brought condemnation to all (5:16). Third, because of this one trespass, death exercised dominion through one man (5:17)."[367] Adam's single sin had a collective effect since it introduced death into the world and subsequent condemnation of all people and "despite their repentance" humanity cannot extricate themselves from sins domination and death.

Paul's discourse in Romans 7 is considered his "anthropological argument"[368] and best characterizes the human predicament, "but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (7:23-24). Udo Schnelle's theology of the New Testament views this homily as a "fundamental anthropological state of affairs," believing that, "human beings are torn in two and of themselves are not in the situation to restore their own integrity."[369] Since "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23), deliverance from this human predicament must come from some entity outside the human realm. Fidelity to God's law given through Moses will not save them but only exacerbates the human situation since

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[366] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 176.

[367] Ibid., 177.

[368] Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament*, 288. Matera highlights four principal texts that map Paul's anthropology in Romans, "Rom. 1:18-3:20 (Gentiles and Jews under the power of sin); 5:12-21 (Adam and Christ); 6:12-23 (slavery to sin); and 7:1-25 (the law frustrated the power of sin)." Matera, *God's Saving Grace*, 90.

[369] Schnelle, *The Theology of the New Testament*, 289.

when the "law came in" sin only increased (5:20). The law then serves a valuable function according to Paul since "if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin" (7:7). The law exposes that the "members of [our] mortal body were given over to sin" and are used as "instruments of wickedness so that those under the power of sin were slaves to sin (6:16)" and consequently "slaves to impurity (6:19). The result of such enslavement is death: the wages of sin (6:23). The power of sin is such that there is no way for humanity to escape the situation."[370] Sin's enslavement is not only pervasive but insidious; Paul writes,

> I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members." (7:15-25)

Paul therefore comes to the conclusion that he is "wretched" (7:26) and incapable of eradicating himself from the human predicament.

The "real culprit," then, is sin which "took advantage of the law in order to produce death so that, through the law, the real nature of sin could be unmasked (7:13)."[371] Although this passage is spoken in the first person singular pronoun "I," it is referential for all "unredeemed humanity." Matera notes,

> All have sinned, Jew as well as Gentile, because all are under the power of sin unleashed by Adam's transgression. All are under the power of sin, which brought death into the world and takes advantage of the law to deceive those under the law. Although human beings know what the law requires and even delight in it,

[370] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 178.
[371] Ibid.

> no one does the works that the law prescribes because all are under the power of sin.[372]

Although the law brings death, it is human sin that is nevertheless to blame for their condition since "the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good" (7:12).[373]

Paul's negative anthropology is meant to render any vestige of human goodness inoperative which only accentuates their need of salvation which comes from God alone. This view of the human person is reinforced in the remaining letters of the Pauline Tradition with each making their own unique contribution to New Testament anthropology. In 1 Corinthians, for instance, the notion of original sin which debilitates humanity in Romans is affirmed, "as in Adam all die Adam's death introduces sin into the world" (15:22). Different however is its emphasis on the ineptitude of human wisdom, derived from Greek philosophy, to extricate humanity from their predicament and to "know God" (1:21). The human condition in 2 Corinthians is characterized likewise as iniquitous, in darkness (6:14), succumbing to idol worship (6:17), and operating in a sphere of uncleanliness (6:17). In Galatians, similar to Romans, all are equally condemned because of sin and "incapable of keeping God's commands" therefore they "stand individually and existentially under the curse of God."[374] Paul's view of the human situation in these letters is not inimitable, according to Thielman, but

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[372] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 178.

[373] Thielman in his commentary on this passage writes, "In 7:7-25 Paul explains why the period dominated by the Mosaic law was a time of ever-increasing sin among God's people (7:5, 7-25). The fault lay not with the law but with sin, which used the law to deceive the individual into rebellion against God's command. When God said, 'Do not covet" in the Mosaic law (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21), sin used the commandment to create all kinds of covetousness in the individual. The commandment itself was not sinful, therefore, but was the tool sin used to deceive the individual (7:7-12). Sin was able to do this because of the weakness of the individual's flesh. Thus, even when the individual agreed with the law that its commandments were good, sin so enslaved the flesh that the individual was still utterly unable to obey the law (7:13-25)." Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 363.

[374] Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 269.

is derived from the Hebrew canon in passages from the Psalmist, "no man living is righteous before thee" (143:2) and can also be found in apocryphal literature like Baruch, "We did not heed the voice of the Lord our God in all the words of the prophets whom he sent to us, but we each followed the intent of his own wicked heart by serving other gods and doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord our God" (1:21).[375] Daniel's confession of his sin and "the sin of my people Israel" (9:20) presupposes the pervasive nature of sin. Israel's "long history of sin against the Mosaic law" is foundational in Paul's thought in Galatians that underscores "the role of the individual in the sin that dominated whole peoples and eras."[376] Sin has held humanity "under the sway of evil" or "under the power of the flesh with its desires" in this letter (5:17) which is marked by "fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like" (5:19). Like Romans, the law in Galatians "functioned as Israel's 'disciplinarian'" by exposing humanity's sin and enslavement to these "powers beyond their control."[377]

Ephesians discloses that prior to their conversion the church members were "dead through the trespasses and sins…following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience" (2:1-2). Humanity in this letter is marked by enslavement to the "passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind," consequently they "were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind" (2:3). They submitted to a malevolent tyrant, that is, the devil, whom Paul calls "the ruler of the power of the air" and, consequently, they are "destined

[375] Since biblical theology is largely a "Protestant project," the extracanonical books of the Old Testament included in the canon of the Catholic Church are prefaced as "apocryphal." Matera, *New Testament Theology*, xix.

[376] Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 364.

[377] Matera, *God's Saving Grace*, 90.

for God's wrath."[378] In Philippians, similar to Romans and Galatians, those who follow the law, like Paul himself, are nevertheless condemned because of their sin nature. They are admonished therefore to avoid putting any confidence in "the flesh" (3:3) to restore their relationship with God. Colossians reveals that people dwell "in a realm of darkness from which they could not release themselves" (1:13-14).[379] Before their conversion, they were "dead in trespasses" which produced a "bond which stood against [them] with its legal demands" (2:13). Like Ephesians, all people are held captive to evil powers which is called "earthly" which is characterized by "fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry…anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth" (3:5-9). The Colossians, accordingly, "were destined for God's wrath because their life was still determined by their old self. That is, they belonged to adamic humanity. Their transgressions were expressions of their hostility to and alienation from God."[380]

This sentence is reiterated in 1 Thessalonians, where the human situation is also depicted as dire, consequently they are "destined for God's wrath because they worshiped idols and did not know the true and living God (1:9-10)."[381] They are compared to nonbelievers who are unchaste, unholy, operate in the "passion of lust," offending their brothers, and unclean (4:3-7). In the epistle of 1 Timothy, false teachings and unsound doctrine are prevalent among humanity who is described as "sinners" whom Paul considers "foremost" among them (1:15). Humanity in this epistle is "lawless and disobedient," "unholy and profane," "murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers,"

[378] Matera, *God's Saving Grace*, 95.
[379] Ibid., 94.
[380] Ibid.
[381] Ibid., 96.

"manslayers, immoral persons, sodomites, kidnapers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine" (1:9-10). These assorted negative traits continue in 2 Timothy when humanity is described as "lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it" (3:2-5). This view again affirmed in Titus who notes that prior to their new life in Christ they were all "foolish, disobedient, led astray, [and] slaves to various passions and pleasures" (3:3). This particularly negative anthropology persists either explicitly or implicitly throughout the Pauline Tradition and is further compounded by humanity's incapacity to be reconciled to God through acts of contrition or following moral laws. This dismal portrayal of the human predicament best defines the "problem" for his readers, which is human sin, and accentuates the "solution" which is the gospel that Paul preaches.

2.3.3. The Johannine Tradition on the Problem of Sin

Similar features of the Synoptic and Pauline traditions regarding the human predicament appears in the Johannine tradition. In this literature humanity "finds itself in a situation characterized by darkness, sin, death, and utter denial of the truth that is God."[382] The "most surprising aspect of this predicament," according to Matera, which is one of John's unique contributions to New Testament anthropology, "is that the world is not aware of it. Consequently, even though the light has come into the world, the world

[382] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 295.

prefers the darkness to the light because its deeds are evil (3:19)."[383] Humanity's "blindness" is likewise exposed due to their sin and they are "desperately" in need of salvation.[384] Matera therefore finds the story of Jesus and the man born blind in John 9 indicative of the "world's predicament" with the Pharisees in this chapter representative of the human condition, since they claim that they "see" but are in fact "blind" and guilty of sin (9:41).[385] Insofar as the world prefers darkness to light it is "under the power of 'the ruler of this world' (12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and since "its works are evil" they hate God who is alone is good (7:7). The world, then, works in concert with evil that rules the universe (12:31) and, accordingly, rejoices over the demise of the good (16:20). Matera in his analysis of John's anthropology offers the following summary,

> The world, which is the object of God's love, finds itself in a predicament of which it is not even aware until the light comes into the world to expose the darkness in which it dwells. Because its deeds are evil and it prefers to dwell in the darkness, the world does not realize that it is under the control of "the ruler of this world." Left to itself, the world is blind to the truth of its predicament…humanity prefers to live apart from God's revelation lest it be compelled to see itself for what it truly is. It fears God's revelation because in revealing the Father, the Son reveals humanity to itself. It proclaims that apart from God humanity cannot enjoy the light that is life.[386]

Familiar themes of the other traditions emerge in this Gospel's narrative, then, such as the prevalence of human sin, humanity's volitional rebellion against God, their inability to

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[383] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 295-296.

[384] Ibid., 435.

[385] Unlike the RSV, most translations such as the KJV, New American Bible (NAB), New American Standard (NAS), New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), translate the term "*hamartia*" in John 9:41 as "sin" rather than "guilt."

[386] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 296. Despite this seemingly pessimistic view of the world, Karl Schelkle in his New Testament theology notes that in John's Gospel, the world is nevertheless God's creation which he loves (3:16; 15:9). Yet it has been "perverted by sin into a world of disaster and death…[Further,] the wickedness of the world was manifest in its rejection of God's revelation (John 3:19). This rejection of Christ and of the Son of God is the essential sin [1:5, 10]. 'If I had not come and had not spoken to them, they would have no sin.' (John 15:22). [Further] the Spirit will convince the world of sin (John 16:8-9). If the gifts of Christ to the world are truth, and life, sin produces the opposite of each: lies (John 8:55), darkness (John 3:19), and death (John 8:21, 24)." Karl Hermann Schelkle, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol II. *Salvation History—Revelation*. trans. William A. Jurgens (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1976), 56.

extricate themselves from this condition and the impending judgment that will occur because of their sinful behavior.[387] Further that the problem of the human predicament is explicated first in the Johannine tradition before the solution, that is the cross, is explicated.

The frequency with which the term "sin" appears in the Johannine tradition is second only to Romans. This reveals the importance of this concept for understanding his argument which is to demonstrate that the world is in darkness and in need of light.[388] The "world" is a euphemism for the prevalence of humanity's sinful condition. The world is characterized as hating God and its "works" are construed as "evil" (7:7). The world is located "below" which is characterized by evil and in darkness and contrasted with good and light which comes from "above" (8:23). Since God is good, and likewise the children of God, the world "hates" them because they convict humanity of sin and their natural adversity to the "truth." If God's children were "of the world" they would become enmeshed in its evil works which is bent of propagating the "lie" which is of the devil. Similar to Ephesians and Colossians, then, the world is both characterized and controlled by the "ruler of the world" which is "the devil" (12:31; 16:11) who was "a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him." Further, when the devil "lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (8:44). Sin, in John, is ubiquitous, since Jesus assumes that all people

[387] Marshall (*New Testament Theology*, 519) further notes that because of sin humanity, according to John, "[stands] self-condemned (Jn 3:17-19; 8:15; 12:47-48), under judgment of God. [Further that their] judgment is in the future (Jn 5:24, 29; 12:48), but it can also be regarded as having taken place already (Jn 3:18; 16:11); it places the world under God's wrath (Jn 3:36), and the sentence pronounced is death (Jn 8:24)."

[388] Schnelle, *The Theology of the New Testament*, 723. Schnelle states that the term sin in the Gospel of John and in 1 John occurs seventeen times each and this is particularly significant considering the brevity of the latter work. Sin, or *hamartia*, therefore is used far more frequently in John's Gospel than in the Synoptic Tradition in which it appears six times in Mark, seven in Matthew, twelve times in Luke and once in Acts (in its singular form).

are sinners according to John 8:7, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." Distinct to John is that sin is not construed as a moral category such as in Matthew but is primarily defined as "unbelief" in Jesus whom God has sent to save the world from the power of sin and the devil.[389]

This concept is affirmed in the shorter epistles such as 1 John where unbelief "in the name of his Son Jesus Christ" (3:23) is viewed as a violation of God's commandment and therefore perceived as sin. Moreover, anyone "who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne to his Son" (5:10). In 1 John, the metaphorical dualism used in the Gospel of John such as "light and darkness" remains but its terminology changes to "good and evil." Also, those who sin are considered children of the devil who "has sinned from the beginning" (3:8) and these progenies "reveal their alliance with the devil by sinning."[390] The duality of truth and error also appears in 1 John. Those who are "deceived" mistakenly believe that they "have no sin" therefore they are "a liar, and the truth is not in him (2:4) and are governed by "the spirit of error" (4:6). Karl Schelkle in his New Testament theology states that in the epistle of 1 John,

> Sin is *injustice*, as the denial of the divine justice (1 John 5:17); and *lawlessness*, as being in opposition to the divine will which imposes an order of conduct (1 John 3:4). In the last analysis, sin is hostility to God—indeed, complete opposition to God; it is the work of the devil (John 6:70; 1 John 3:8).[391]

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[389] On the synonymic relationship between sin and unbelief Schnelle writes, "The Johannine understanding of sin exhibits a clear theological profile: sin is neither a legal nor a moral category. Instead, the predominant use of the word in the singular points to the fact that John understands sin in a general, comprehensive sense: *sin is unbelief, lack of faith*…all those who do not believe in the Revealer Jesus Christ find themselves in the realm of sin, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. The Johannine concept of faith permits a further inference: just as faith grants life, eternal life, so lack of faith, i.e., sin, separates from life. The true antonym of 'sin' in the Gospel of John is 'life' – eternal life." Schnelle, *The Theology of the New Testament*, 725. (Schnelle's emphasis)

[390] Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 547.

[391] Schelkle, *Theology of the New Testament*, 56.

John acknowledges the insidiousness of sin because it continues to affect the lives of the redeemed. Although they are "saved" they must remain diligent since they can be assailed by the negative influence of the sin-filled world.[392] They will, therefore, "not be finally saved until the parousia and the general resurrection of the dead. Thus believers live with a tension in their lives; they live between what has already happened and what has not yet occurred."[393]

2.3.4. Other Voices on the Problem of Sin

The "Other Voices" offer their own distinct contributions to New Testament anthropology and together comprise a fuller picture of the human predicament.[394] In the Letter to the Hebrews for instance sin is characterized as "deceitfulness" which "hardens" the human heart (3:13). Sin is the "fundamental threat faced by humanity" since "the work of the devil and death are concentrated in sin, for it is through sin that death invades and commandeers life, and sin receives its reward in death."[395] Sin is unholy (7:26), unclean (10:2), understood as a "fleeting pleasure" attracting the "flesh" (11:25), and the principal encumbrance to living a life pleasing to God (12:1). All sinners are hostile to God (12:3) and, paradoxically, sin's avoidance is an impossible struggle (12:4). The human predicament therefore is dreadful since, like the other epistles, humanity cannot extricate themselves from this situation. Even the sacrificial system that was prescribed

[392] Regarding insidiousness of sin even in the life of the redeemed, in this epistle, Rudolf Schnackenburg states, "Nowhere is the subject of sin in the life of the Christian dealt with at such depth and with such realism as in the First Epistle of John. The author is in no way inferior to Paul in his insistence that sin must be completely eliminated for the life of the Christian." Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Christian Existence in the New Testament*, vol. II, trans. Joseph Blenkinsopp (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 117.

[393] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 330.

[394] The "Other Voices" in Matera's study are comprised of the books of Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation.

[395] Schnelle, *The Theology of the New Testament*, 641-642.

for Israel in Leviticus 16 cannot make satisfactory atonement since it fails to "adequately deal with sin."[396]

James' anthropology is revealed in his opening chapter when associates human sin with inordinate desire whose consequence is death. Sin is described as a volitional act which offers humanity no excuse for their aberrant behavior. James writes, "each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death" (1:14-15). The avoidance of sin and its consequences according to James is impossible because, "one must observe all of the commandments," since, "To violate one commandment is to violate the entire law, for God's will is one."[397] Humanity's "tongue" epitomizes the human condition since "the tongue is a fire [and]…an unrighteous world among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the cycle of nature, and set on fire by hell" (3:6). The tongue is both capable of blessing and cursing since "we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in the likeness of God" (3:9). "Sins of speech" occupy a considerable portion of this letter (1:26-27; 3:1-12; 4:11-12; 5:12) and is best expressed in the fourth chapter of this epistle which catalogues human traits as incessantly jealous, selfish, and boastful (3:14) causing wars because of covetousness and distorted passions (4:1-2). The human race, apart from the gospel according to James 4, is comprised of "Unfaithful creatures!" and they are friends with the world and therefore at "enmity with God" (4:4). "All sinners" are called to "cleanse" their hands, "purify" their heart, avoid double-mindedness, and "resist the devil" so that "he will flee" from them (4:8). Matera commenting on this ubiquitous admonition writes,

[396] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 436.
[397] Ibid., 362.

> James does not distinguish between the human condition before and after Christ. What is found in chapter 4 can be applied to the believer as well as to the unbeliever. For James the human condition is conflicted and double-minded even among believers, since not all have appropriated the wisdom from above. Because they are driven by desire, humans seek to be friends with God and friends with the world.[398]

Matera concludes, that "what James urges," then, "is a life of perfection characterized by full and complete devotion to God."[399]

A similar view of the human person apart from the gospel appears in 1 Peter. Humanity's "futile ways" are highlighted in this letter that was "inherited" from their fathers. Alienated from God, because they are "held captive to sin" (1:18), they are not counted among "God's people" and live perilous lives apart from God's mercy (2:10). In 2 Peter the world is considered "corrupt" (1:4) and its inhabitants compared to "irrational animals" or "creatures of instinct, born to be caught and killed" (2:12). According to this epistle humanity is blind, shortsighted, and mired in sin with virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, and brotherly affection all missing in the human character (1:5-9). Further, they "count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their dissipation" (2:13) and "have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin" and "have hearts trained in greed" (2:14). "Forsaking the right way" humanity, generally, have "gone astray" (2:15) and are likened to "waterless springs and mists driven by a storm" (2:17).

In Jude there is a sharp division of people into "sinners" and "saints." The latter are characterized as "beloved in God" (1:1) in contrast to the former who are considered "ungodly sinners" (1:15). What "happened at Sodom and Gomorrah, which were

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[398] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 364.
[399] Ibid.

destroyed by fire, is taken as a vivid picture of what will happen to sinners."[400] Like these cities humanity behaves "immorally and indulged in unnatural lust (1:7). They "defile the flesh, reject authority, and revile the glorious ones" (1:8). They are portrayed as "grumblers, malcontents, following their own passions, loud-mouthed boasters, flattering people to gain advantage" (1:16). They are "scoffers, following their own ungodly passions" and "worldly people, devoid of the Spirit" (1:18-19). "Woe to them!," Jude writes, "For they walk in the way of Cain, and abandon themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error, and perish in Korah's rebellion" (1:11). Comparable to other New Testament epistles, all "sinners" are condemned by God and the "judgment of the great day" against them from God is forthcoming (1:6). Specific details of "judgment day" that are missing in Jude are described in the book of Revelation which takes the form of "seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God" (15:7). Punishment is inflicted "upon those who refuse to repent"[401] and believe the gospel. Eternal torment "in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur" is their lot together with "the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted," also the "murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars" (21:8). The devil "who had deceived" humanity will join them and likewise "be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (20:10). The theme of repentance in the Gospels at the beginning of the New Testament reemerges at the culmination of the canon when "the seven churches that are in Asia" are admonished by "the Risen Jesus" through the writer John (1:4-5) to "repent" of their backsliding (2:5, 16, 22; 3:3, 19). Further, the consequences of those who reject the gospel and continue in their sins are severe (9:20, 21; 16:9, 11).

[400] Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 666.
[401] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 405.

2.3.5. Summary

Despite their varied contexts, genres, and occasions for the letters the view of the human situation is constant throughout the New Testament which is the leading theme of Matera's master story, namely Christian anthropology.[402] All writers, according to Marshall, presuppose that "there is a situation of human need that is understood as sin that places sinners under divine judgment."[403] He notes further that "the biblical story of the creation of human beings who were expected to love and obey God" have "fallen into rebellion and sin."[404] Humanity is in a situation in which they are unable to extricate themselves. Sin, then, is viewed as the primary "problem" which separates humanity from God, and apart from a divine act of forgiveness, they will perish in their sin.

Although sin is described in many ways such as immorality in Matthew, unbelief in John, or a violation of the law according to Paul, there is unanimity that all people are guilty and in desperate need of God's forgiveness. Schelkle supports Anderson's work regarding the "physicality" of sin because "it possesses a certain 'thingness,'"[405] and it is this conception of the problem is pervasive in the New Testament. Schelkle writes,

> Sin is not merely a state and suppression of human self-awareness, such that a man need only be issued a summons to forget the sin and to vanquish it. It is not merely the consciousness of guilt but the guilt itself which is to be removed. Sin is a reality beyond human disposition. Forgiveness must come, must take place, from a source beyond human capabilities.[406]

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[402] M. Eugene Boring on the constancy of the human condition in the New Testament writes, "Jesus, like John the Baptist, Paul, and biblical theology in general, makes the assumption of universal sinfulness. Jesus assumes, and does not argue, that every person who comes before he Holy One in prayer comes as a guilty one who needs God's forgiveness. Sin is here thought of as a debt owed to God—a debt one cannot repay (cf. 18:21-35)." M. Eugene Boring, *The Gospel of Matthew*," vol. VIII, *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 204.

[403] Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 717.

[404] Ibid., 718.

[405] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, x.

[406] Schelkle, *Theology of the New Testament*, 112.

Contrition or law-keeping is superfluous for reconciling humanity with God because of sin which, along with death, was introduced into the world through Adam. All people, then, are subject to divine judgment which renders the human situation in the New Testament particularly dismal. Another common theme is that New Testament literature typically identifies the problem of sin before they explicate salvation through the cross which suggests that the latter topic is only intelligible in light of the former subject.

These main themes concerning Christian anthropology that have emerged in this chapter are important since they define the characteristics necessary in the solution to the problem of sin that will be discussed in the following chapter. Among these characteristics is that repayment for sin is required in the form of a "hard currency."[407] Methods of payment such as contrition or a change of heart are therefore insufficient which suggests that recompense is "beyond human capabilities."[408] Repayment must then come from an agent outside the human race since their predicament is universal. Apart from making recompense, humanity will remain in a state of alienation from their God, and, accordingly, face the prospect of eternal death, and continued subjugation to the devil. These major points studied through the lens of the canonical narrative are essential and a precise explication of them necessary for helping to arbitrate some of the current discrepancies concerning the topic of sin in discourse on atonement theology.

[407] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 8.
[408] Schelkle, *Theology of the New Testament*, 112.

CHAPTER THREE: THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN: A BIBLICAL NARRATIVE VIEW

The study of the Second Temple worldview, together with its symbols, rituals, and use of metaphors, as both Anderson and Wright have demonstrated, is essential for properly understanding New Testament literature in general, and topics such as sin and its consequences in particular. Their work, together with Matera's study of Christian anthropology in the New Testament, exposes several recurring themes that characterize the human situation. First, sin is ubiquitous. That is, it affects all humanity, both Jew and Gentile alike. This is due to the original disobedience of Adam, and subsequent volitional sins committed by every person. Second, sin is construed as a "thing," taking the form of a "burden" or "stain" in the First Temple period then shifting to a "debt" during the Second Temple and New Testament eras. This "debt" is something humanity is obligated to pay, however no person has the means to make satisfactory recompense. Third, humanity consequently is alienated from God, or in a "state of exile," subjugated by "evil forces," and faces the prospect of death. The human predicament is therefore particularly dire since they are in a position from which they are unable to extricate themselves. Humanity, according to the biblical narrative is in need of God's forgiveness, which brings reconciliation or atonement, liberates them from captivity, and gives them "life." Specifically how sins are forgiven in this narrative can be discerned by studying New Testament soteriology in light of Second Temple thought. This is the primary focus of Wright's continued historical study which shifts, accordingly, from act three of the biblical story, namely "Israel," to "Jesus" and "the early church"[409] which are acts four

[409] The "early church" era, according to Wright (*People of God*, 341), spans from 30-135 AD.

and five respectively. These are the final two acts that complete Wright's five-part canonical narrative structure.[410]

Similar to his research of Judaism's symbols used to understand the notion of "exile," Wright considers the prominent symbols of Christianity, specifically the cross, to reconstruct the first century Christian worldview pertaining to salvation, or the "new exodus." The ubiquity of sin, or Israel's current state of exile, is presupposed by the early church writers whose primary goal then is to articulate that God has forgiven sin through Israel's prophesied Messiah, Jesus. How the Messiah fulfills this vocation is described in the Synoptic Gospels which, as the opening books of the New Testament, are essential since they continue the story of salvation from the Second Temple period. This master narrative, connected by the ongoing message of salvation, Wright submits, is discernable only by comprehending the first century Jewish worldview. Since "the first generation of Christianity" was "essentially Jewish in form," contemporary theologians must therefore think "Jewishly" if they are to accurately interpret New Testament soteriology.[411] Wright's work is essential, then, for establishing a Jewish context for Matera's study of salvation in the New Testament to follow. Together their work will serve as a basis for comparing soteriology according to the underlying story of salvation in the biblical narrative with the diverse views of atonement theology in the next chapter.

3.1. Forgiveness of Sins as the End of Exile: The Work of N. T. Wright

3.1.1. Judaism and the Early Church

[410] Wright's five-part thematic structure is comprised of, 1) Creation; 2) Fall; 3) Israel; 4)Jesus, and 5) the early church (Wright, *People of God*, 141-142). Act five, or "the early church," is inferred from Wright's text.

[411] Ibid., 427.

Wright's historical study of the early church is derived primarily from his analysis of the Synoptic literature and the letters of Paul from the perspective of a Second Temple worldview.[412] Wright submits that the nascent church's conception of Jesus was based on their collective vision that they, through faith in the Messiah, are God's chosen people whose mission is to continue God's program initiated by Israel to be a "light to the world." A synopsis of the early church's worldview is offered by Wright,

> We are a new group, a new movement, and yet not new, because we claim to be the true people of the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the creator of the world. We are the people for whom the creator god was preparing the way through his dealings with Israel. To that extent, we are like Israel; we are emphatically monotheists, not pagan polytheists, marked out from the pagan world by our adherence to the traditions of Israel, and yet distinguished from the Jewish world in virtue of the crucified Jesus and the divine spirit, and by our fellowship in which the traditional Jewish and pagan boundary-markers are transcended.[413]

First century Christianity, similar to Israel before them, identifies themselves as God's people living among neighbors who neither recognize nor honor God as the creator, and,

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[412] The early church, for Wright, is marked by two significant events, Jesus' crucifixion and the martyrdom Polycarp. The former event is clearly the more significant since it "sets not only the chronological and (in the full sense) historical starting-point for the movement: it also actually sets the tone for most of the major fixed points." (Wright, *People of God*, 347) Wright acknowledges that extracanonical sources for reconstructing early church history compared to the information that reveals the worldview of Second Temple Judaism, is meager. This is due largely to the fact that first century Christian literature lacked the equivalent of a Josephus who offers a wealth of data on the Second Temple era from the perspective of a historian. Wright therefore turns to the work of early patristic theologians such as Ignatius, Justin, Polycarp, Pliny, and various pagan and Jewish sources in addition to New Testament literature to reconstruct the historical situation of the early church.

[413] Wright, *People of God*, 369. Wright defends the "Jewishness" of early Christianity in contrast to scholars such as Rudolph Bultmann, Ernst Käsemann, Hans Conzelmann, and recent views such as Burton Mack and J. Dominic Crossman who suggest that they were "only marginally or tangentially Jewish." Rather, they emphasize the influence of Hellenism's Gnostic and Cynic teachings in Christian thought beginning in the work of Paul whom they believe initiated the move from Judaism to Hellenism which in turn influenced later Christian thought. Further, Wright (*People of God*, 343-344) believes this conclusion to be mistaken stating that "[this] whole scheme of thought, with its neat ethnic divisions and its tidy chronology, has a pleasing simplicity. It has recently become apparent however, that these are achieved at the cost of the data. It cannot accommodate phenomena which are increasingly making themselves felt, such as Jewish Gnosticism, Gentile apocalypticism, or signs of 'early catholicism' (such as an insistence on the passing on of tradition) which occur in the very earliest stratum." Wright cites Romans 6 as a prime example of the latter most development, "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed" (Rom. 6:17).

rather, falsely worship idols to whom they are in "bondage." Since their worldview challenges the prevailing "power-structures" of both Israel and Rome, the church is consequently persecuted. This persecution is only exacerbated by their Jewish detractors since they invite Gentiles to join their "Jewish sect," and further by the Romans whom they convict of sin, and their consequent need of God's forgiveness. The context and worldview of the early church, Wright contends, informs the work of every New Testament writer, particularly how they conceive of sin and forgiveness.

Early Christian identity was characterized as a "subversive" Jewish faction due largely to their foremost allegiance to "Christ" whom they considered to be "king" in lieu of Caesar.[414] The notion of a "kingdom of God" preached by Jesus and the early church's worship of him had therefore political implications since it was a perceived threat, according to Wright, to the Roman hierarchy. Other distinguishing characteristics of early church identity were their lack of statehood, coinage, and a military that offered them protection.[415] Yet what differentiated them most from their surrounding culture was their reverence of the cross. This central symbol of the early church was equivalent to the Judaism's Temple, Torah, and Land that likewise distinguished them from their Gentile neighbors. Although the cross remains the primary symbol of Christianity today, the contemporary church, Wright contends, has become desensitized to the horrific nature of a crucifixion in the context of the first century Roman world. The peculiarity or "folly" of worshipping someone that was crucified during this era is noted by Paul (1 Cor. 1:18), or "madness" according to later patristic theologians such as Justin Martyr.[416] This oddity however was justified according to the early church since this symbol of apparent defeat

[414] Wright, *People of God*, 365.
[415] Ibid.
[416] Ibid., 366.

was perceived as a decisive victory since their Messiah overcame death and the devil through his resurrection. First century Christians believed this victory to be communicable through following Jesus whom they believed God had chosen to save and vindicate his people.[417] Early Christians therefore chose torture or death rather than denying the kingship of Jesus knowing that their lives will be vindicated by God. Fidelity and hope were therefore the mark of God's true people when faced with persecution. This can be validated historically in the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 6:9-7:60), and Paul (2 Cor. 11:23-27) who was regularly persecuted for the sake of preaching God's message of salvation through Jesus. Their obstinacy when faced with death testified to their pagan surroundings their new life in Christ marked by their gratitude for the forgiveness of their sins they received through the death of God's Messiah. Despite being ridiculed, Christians refused to deny or even attenuate this central symbol of their faith and instead "grasped it to themselves as the paradoxical truth by which the world was saved."[418] Wright notes that the death and resurrection of Christ, accordingly, "are clearly central to virtually all known forms of early Christianity."[419] Further that "very early within the Christian tradition a theological interpretation was given to Jesus' death. 'Christ died *for our sins*' was already a traditional formula within a few years of the crucifixion; Paul

[417] Wright (*People of God*, 370) offers the following narration of early church thought, "Israel's hope has been realized; the true god has acted decidedly to defeat the pagan gods, and to create a new people, through whom he is to rescue the world from evil. This he has done through the true King, Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, in particular through his death and resurrection. The process of implementing this victory, by means of the same god continuing to act through his own spirit in his people, is not yet complete. One day the King will return to judge the world, and to set up a kingdom which in on a different level to the kingdoms of the present world order. When this happens those who have died as Christians will be raised to a new physical life. The present powers will be forced to acknowledge Jesus as Lord, and justice and peace will triumph at last." Wright (Ibid. [fn. 44]) further notes, "This belief in the future judgment and salvation was held by writers throughout the first Christian centuries, without any noticeable sense that it had been called into question by failing to happen at the end of a generation."

[418] Ibid., 366.

[419] Ibid., 400.

could not long afterwards that 'the son of god loved me and gave himself for me."[420] Wright concludes that their interpretation of the cross fits well into the overall narrative of God's story of Israel and a new people invited to become God's people.

The cross supplanted the Jewish symbols that characterized the people of God. Yet the Torah, Temple, and Land were not considered obsolete but were valuable to writers like Paul who reworked them around the Messiah, Jesus. In fact most of the Old Testament literature, particularly the Psalms and the prophetic literature were reread to demonstrate that "the true god had prepared the way for the coming of Christ through the whole story of Israel which had reached its intended climax with his death and resurrection."[421] Jesus was the Messiah through whom YHWH was restoring his people. "Israel's god," according to Wright, had "come in the person of Jesus…to forgive her of her sin and lead them out of exile."[422] The "*forgiveness of sins*," according to Wright, is "*another way of saying 'return from exile*'"[423] The early church believed that in Jesus "the great Jewish story had reached its long-awaited fulfilment, and now world history had entered a new phase, the final phase in the drama of which the Jewish story itself was only one part."[424] Israel's forgiveness of sin through Jesus constituted a "renewed covenant" that formed that basis of the kingdom which has four parts: 1. Return from exile, 2. The defeat of evil (Israel's enemies) 3. Rescue of people by YHWH, 4. The return of YHWH to Zion.[425] The kingdom of God became a reality through Jesus the Messiah which infers a high Christology in the New Testament narrative since Jesus is

[420] Wright, *Victory of God*, 109. (Wright's emphasis) This is Wright's citation of a "very early formula" that predates Paul's words in 1 Cor. 15:3. This view clearly supports the idea of substitutionary atonement theology in early church conceptions of on the cross.

[421] Wright, *People of God*, 366.

[422] Ibid., 72.

[423] Wright, *Victory of God*, 268. (Wright's emphasis)

[424] Wright, *People of God*, 445.

[425] Wright, *Victory of God*, 229.

associated with YHWH's return and further that "the god of Israel had now made himself known in and through, and even *as*, Jesus and the divine spirit."[426]

3.1.2. Israel and the Kingdom of God

Though a high Christology characterizes the person of Jesus, his saving work, is in accordance with the succession of Israel's prophets that prefigure his ministry. The role of biblical prophet, Wright states, is to summon people to repent of their sin and turn to God whom they have offended. "The prophets, moreover," Wright contends, "interpreted the exile as the punishment: for Israel's sin; the need of exile would, therefore, be 'the forgiveness of sins.' It would mean Israel's redemption, evil's defeat, and YHWH's return."[427] These features characterized "the kingdom of God" that was begun by the Hebrew prophets and realized in Messiah's ministry. Jesus in his inauguration of the kingdom, then, is not creating a "new story" that is variant to Second Temple thought but "*a new moment in the same story*."[428]

Similar to the former prophets, Jesus' preaching and teaching had an apocalyptic element since the content of his message contains a warning to people of their impending destruction if they fail to repent and turn from their sin. Wright states,

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[426] Wright, *People of God*, 474. (Wright's emphasis) Early Christianity then operated on the presupposition of a high Christology based on the very early texts discovered on the "Christ Hymn" of Philippians 2:6-11, "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men…." Wright (*People of God*, 445) notes that low Christology did not emerge until later with the "third century Pseudo-Clementines."

[427] N. T. Wright, "The Historical Jesus and Christian Theology," *Sewanee Theological Review* 39, 1996, 405.

[428] Wright, *Victory of God*, 219. (Wright's emphasis) Further, Wright notes, that Jesus' appropriation of Second Temple symbols and stories did not constitute an "abandonment" of Act 3 (Israel) "*but that they were living in its long-awaited new phase*." Critically, then, is that there is "all the difference in the world between a new story and a new Act within the same story." This is essential since all interpretations should fit this framework of Creation (Act 1), Fall (Act 2), Israel (Act 3), Jesus (Act 4), the church (Act 5). Jesus, Act 4 of Wright's master narrative, is, then, the answer to the problem of the Fall, Act 2, that has vexed Israel Act 3.

> Jesus exemplified the praxis of a prophet. He was known as a prophet; he spoke of himself as a prophet. He was both an oracular prophet and a leadership prophet. His movement grew out of that of John the Baptist, who was a prophetic figure. Both men were clearly eschatological prophets. They were not merely visionary teachers. They were not merely advocating subversive wisdom behavior. They were announcing, in symbol and narrative, that Israel's story was reaching the point for which Israel had longed.[429]

The figure of John the Baptist is important since his ministry is prototypical of this view. John's "water-baptism for the forgiveness of sins"[430] was a precursor to the new exodus that would be realized in Jesus' ministry. John's message was consonant with the Second Temple regarding sin and forgiveness, or exile and the new exodus respectively. Themes such as God's impending judgment against the unrepentant, and vindication and restoration of his people were primary features in John's preaching and common traits of the first century Jewish worldview.[431] Jesus' self-prophesied death therefore becomes intelligible when viewed within the context of the typical fate of Israel's prophets, Wright contends, whose lives were in constant jeopardy because of the unpopularity of the message from God. Similarly, Jesus' use of miracles and healings to validate his ministry are typical of prophets such as Elisha, and his call for people to repent the mark of Elisha's predecessor Elijah. Jesus' leading the people of Israel out exile infers that a new exodus is occurring which is evocative of the work of Moses, Israel's greatest prophet. All of these signs served to validated Jesus' ministry, and through him God's kingdom was "coming to birth."[432] This new kingdom was confirmed by a renewed covenant between God and Israel in Jesus through whom their sins would be forgiven.

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[429] Wright, "The Historical Jesus and Christian Theology," 405.

[430] Wright, *Victory of God*, 160.

[431] Sanders corroborates this point, "One of the themes of passages in Jewish literature which look forward to the restoration of Israel is the need for repentance, and the same theme appears often in connection with the inclusion of the Gentiles." Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 106.

[432] Wright, *Victory of God*, 191. Judaism's perspective of the kingdom of God has two primary meanings according to by E. P. Sanders, "One is that God reigns in heaven; the 'kingdom of God' or

The "new covenant" is synonymous therefore with the "forgiveness of sins."[433] Reconciliation or atonement, redemption, and restoration are all characteristic of the new exodus and the kingdom of God, which is inaugurated by God through Jesus which is consonant with Second Temple eschatology.[434] In Jesus Israel's destiny and hope was being fulfilled. Those who followed him were considered the "true people of God," and consequently blessed, while God's wrath and judgment fell upon the recalcitrant and impenitent.[435] Wright notes that in Jesus, "It is as though the Kingdom—God's sovereign rule put into effect over Israel and, through Israel, over the world—is present where Jesus is, because he is identified with, and indeed identified as God' people. Where he is, God is ruling the world as he always intended."[436] Although the marks of the coming kingdom according to Second Temple eschatology were the "return from exile," that is the forgiveness of sin which is a defeat of evil, and "the return of YHWH to Zion," they were fulfilled in a "new way" since many of Jesus' teachings and actions subverted their worldview. That is, though the goals were identical with first century Judaism, the means through which they would be accomplished were different since they would not be realized through a political or military victory but by the death and resurrection of their leader, the Messiah, Jesus.

'kingdom of heaven' exists eternally there. God occasionally acts in history, but he completely and consistently governs only heaven. The second is that in the future God will rule the earth. He has chosen to allow human history to run on with relatively little interference, but someday he will bring normal history to an end and govern the world perfectly." Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, 169.

[433] Wright references Matt. 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:16-26 to support this connection.

[434] The "kingdom of God" is characterized by Wright as "'Israel's god, the creator, at last asserting his sovereign rule over the world,' with the connotation of the return from exile, the return of YHWH to Zion, the vindication of Israel by this covenant god, and the defeat of her enemies." Wright, *Victory of God*, 224.

[435] Sanders (*Jesus and Judaism*, 113) notes, "The belief in judgment and punishment, which was intimately tied to the view that God is just…Belief in the punishment or destruction of the wicked, and just retribution against even the righteous for their transgressions, is so common that it is almost unnecessary to give examples."

[436] N. T. Wright, "Jesus, Israel and the Cross," *Society of Biblical Literature* (1985): 83.

The intersection of Christology and soteriology in Jesus suggests that the Messiah is in some way both God and man. For instance, the forgiveness of sin can only come through God (c.f., Mark 2:7; Luke 5:21), and it is God who returns to Zion in the person of the Messiah. Further that the kingdom is described as belonging to God *and* the Messiah according to early church. Paul writes, "Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5). The fact that "All things are put in subjection under [the Messiah]" (1 Cor. 15:27) also intimates that the nature of the Messiah is that of God and man.[437] Wright notes that "the creator god is completing, through Jesus, the Messiah, the purpose for which the covenant was instituted, namely, dealing with sin and death."[438] Jesus' narratives described YHWH returning to Zion as "judge and redeemer,"

> [and then embodied] it by riding into the city in tears…and by celebrating the final Exodus. I propose, as a matter of history, that Jesus of Nazareth was conscious of vocation, a vocation given him by the one he knew as 'Father,' to enact in himself what, in Israel's scriptures, Israel's God had promised to accomplish. He would be the pillar of cloud for the people of the new Exodus. He would embody in himself the returning and redeeming action of the covenant God."[439]

Jesus not only conveyed but embodied God's message and his characteristics such as forgiving sin, providing redemption and restoration of Israel to God which is distinct from previous prophets since and confirms a high Christology in the early church.

Wright provides a number of examples from Jewish texts that show the accordance between 1st century Christianity's notion of the "forgiveness of sins" as the "return from exile" such as Lamentations, "The punishment of your iniquity, O daughter

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[437] The pericope in 1 Cor. 15:20-28 is, according to Wright, "the earliest writing about the kingdom we possess" and fits within the "framework" of the Second Temple worldview. Wright, *Victory of God*, 216.

[438] Wright, *Victory of God*, 216.

[439] Wright, "The Historical Jesus and Christian Theology," 408.

of Zion, is accomplished, he will keep you in exile no longer" (Lam. 4:22), and Jeremiah, "I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first. I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me" (Jer. 33:7-8). Other excerpts from Jewish sources that support the early Christian conception of the new exodus come from Ezekiel, "Thus says the Lord GOD: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt" (Ezek. 36:33), and Isaiah, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins" (Isa. 40:1-2).[440]

These passages are essential since they suggest that *punishment in the form of captivity was used as currency to pay for what their sin has accrued*. Their release from captivity is an indication that compensation has been made, and therefore "the exile must be ending."[441] Though God's forgiveness of sin was granted on a personal level it involved primarily a corporate restoration of the nation in the Second Temple context.[442] New Testament passages such as Mark 1:4 in which John the Baptist is described as "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" should then be more broadly construed since it borrows from the Jewish conception of repentance on a

[440] Additional passages Wright offers to support his new exodus theology are Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 37:21-23; Isa. 43:25-44:3; 52:1, 3, 9; 53:5-6, 11-12; 54:1, 3, 8; 55:7, 12; Ezra 9:6-15; Neh. 9:6-37; and Bar. 1:15-3:8

[441] Wright, *Victory of God*, 270.

[442] The forgiveness of sin on the personal level in the New Testament, Wright explains, can be found when Jesus heals the paralytic in Matt. 9:1-8 and the woman who anoints Jesus' feet in Luke 7:36-50 are evidential of people experiencing the forgiveness of personal sin *within* the larger context of the nation's forgiveness of sin or exodus. E. P. Sanders corroborates this point. He writes, "Judaism was not primarily a religion of individual salvation. An abiding concern was that God should maintain his covenant with the Jewish *people* and that the *nation* be preserved…National survival looms much larger than individual life after death." E. P. Sanders, *Judaism Practice and Belief 63 BCE-66 CE*, 279.

national scale in addition to contrition on the personal level. John, through the call of repentance, was inaugurating God's salvific plan for the nation of Israel for which they had longed. This conception is foundational to the gospel message since the "return from exile," the "renewed covenant," and the "forgiveness of sins" is another way of offering to them the "kingdom of God." Wright notes, then, that "the central message" of the Gospels "is that the Creator God, Israel's God, is at last reclaiming the whole world as his own, in and through Jesus of Nazareth."[443]

3.1.3. Themes in the Synoptic Gospel's Soteriology in Light of Second Temple Jewish Theology

Wright considers Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) to be illustrative of the essential concepts of exile and restoration.[444] The "prodigal" in this narrative is Israel who goes off to a pagan foreign land, is subsequently enslaved (exile), and later restored (exodus) by the "Father." Like the lost son, Israel needs to repent of their sin which is the reason for their exile, then restoration, may occur. The "return from exile," though, is taking place "in Jesus' own ministry." Luke, together with the other Synoptic Gospel writers, clearly displays Jesus' self-awareness as the "agent" of Israel's "return from exile" and his ministry reflects this awareness. Jesus proclaims that his words and activities are those of "Israel's god." Further, he is fulfilling Israel's expectation that the Gentiles will also be admitted into the kingdom that Jesus is bringing which includes

[443] N. T. Wright, "Kingdom Come: The Public Meaning of the Gospels," *Christian Century*, (2008): 29.

[444] The significance of the parables, and the telling of stories, by Jesus is noted by Wright since this genre is completely compatible with Hebraic tradition. Further, the parables in particular are apocalyptic in nature since they often allude to impending consequences of Israel's sin but also her forgiveness, or redemption, and coming restoration. The parables in this regard were often a microcosm of Jesus' ministry who ultimately restores Israel, and the world. These stories are often "subversive" and designed to "break open worldviews and create new ones." Wright, *Victory of God*, 109.

"sinners" all to the chagrin of the elder brother, that is, the religious rulers.[445] The meals that Jesus eats with sinners therefore parallel the celebration the father for the repatriation of the prodigal son's "return from exile." Important to this gesture, is that "Jesus is claiming that, when he does all this, Israel's god is doing it."[446] Jesus is inaugurating God's kingdom on earth or the return of YHWH to save those in sin. Yet Jesus' actions, like the prophets before him, are not well received, and he would be put to death which is the fate of a prophet.[447]

Luke, like many of his Jewish contemporaries prior to the coming of Jesus, recognized that Israel remained in exile due to sin, and their eschatology was defined by God's promise of redemption. This predisposition helped Luke frame his narrative in such a way that in the story of Jesus that he told, "sin was finally dealt with" unequivocally, and "redemption [was] at last secured."[448] Luke, though, was also attentive to the fact that when redemption did occur, in accord with the Second Temple worldview, God's salvation would be brought to the *world* which included the Gentile community. Luke's narrative, therefore,

> was a *Jewish* message for the *Gentile* world, [he] blended together two apparently incompatible genres with consummate skill. He told the story of Jesus as a Jewish story, indeed as the Jewish story…But he told it in such a way as to say to his non-Jewish Greco-Roman audience: here, in the life of this one man, is the Jewish message of salvation that you pagans need.[449]

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[445] The "sinners" to whom the Gospels are referring is derived from the perspective of the Pharisees and comprised, but not limited to, non-Pharisees, Gentiles (lesser breeds without the law), the "people of the land" (or half-breeds), publicans, and prostitutes. Wright, *Victory of God*, 264-265.

[446] Wright, *Victory of God*, 130.

[447] Distinct however from other Hebrew prophets is that he was vindicated by his resurrection. The prediction of Jesus' suffering and death was prophesied in the Old Testament according to Jesus in Luke 24:26, "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

[448] Wright, *People of God*, 381.

[449] Ibid.

In both his Gospel and Acts, Luke is able to include the Gentile community without compromising Jewish theological tenets of monotheism, election, or eschatology. Rather, he subsumes these themes to demonstrate how they find their completion in the ministry of Jesus and the church. This is important for demonstrating that while sin is ubiquitous, God's plan of redemption and restoration through the death and resurrection of the Messiah is offered to the "world" and this, for the Gospel writers, is the central theme of the biblical narrative.

Matthew's Gospel has a "thoroughly Jewish flavour," according to Wright, and among the leading representatives of the "Jewish Christianity" genre.[450] The "overall plot" of Matthew's Gospel is revealed in his opening chapter, "you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (1:21).[451] Wright illustrates that this plot, disclosed at the beginning of Matthew, presupposes an anthropology that is marked by sin, and that God has initiated his plan of salvation through Jesus, Israel's Messiah. Matthew's genealogical exposition at the onset of his work is meant to situate his Gospel within the Old Testament narrative which suggests that it is a continuation of its salvation story. Similar to Luke, Matthew identifies Jesus' kingdom as the fulfillment of Jewish messianic prophecy, and therefore successor to the Davidic reign. Jesus as both Messiah and heir to the throne are disclosed in the opening verse of Matthew, "Jesus Christ, the son of David" (1:1), and continues throughout his narrative.[452] According to Wright,

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[450] Wright, *People of God*, 384. Though Jewish in "flavor," Wright (Ibid.) notes, that it also "contains some of the harshest words against Jewish leaders anywhere in the New Testament." He cites Jesus' words in Matt. 23:1-39 that severely critique the hypocritical practices of the scribes and Pharisees.

[451] Ibid., 385. Wright references the work of Frank J. Matera, "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (1987): 233-253. Also, Mark Powell, "The Plot and Subplots of Matthew's Gospel." *New Testament Studies* 38 (1992): 187-204. Both support his observation that the topic of sin and salvation is the central plot in Matthew's narrative.

[452] Reference to Jesus as "son of David" appears in Matt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15; 22:42, 43, 45.

Second Temple Judaism therefore is portrayed by Matthew as suffering the punishment of exile, and "until the great day of redemption dawned, Israel was still 'in her sins,' still in need of rescue."[453] Matthew's retrospection then helps him frame his argument for the Messiahship of Jesus whom God has sent to liberate Israel from exile, and grant forgiveness of their sins. The exodus theme of the Israelites by their leader Moses who also gives them the law is additionally important to Matthew, and paradigmatic of salvation in their new leader Jesus who effects a "new exodus" and a "new covenant." Wright demonstrates that Israel in Jesus' ministry, like the era of Moses before him, is given the choice between "life or death, curse or blessing," though couched in metaphors such as, "the house on the rock or the sand; the wise or the foolish maidens; the sheep or the goats."[454] Salvation, then, is offered through their promised Messiah, and Israel can now receive "the promised forgiveness of sins rather than the ultimate curse."[455]

Jesus therefore should not be construed as the "founder of the church" since, according to Wright, "*there already was one*, namely the people of Israel itself. Jesus' intention was to *reform* Israel…and not to found a different community altogether."[456] Distinct to Jesus' movement was his follower's loyalty to him that was characterized by living a redeemed life from sin as the mark of "people of the new covenant."[457] To follow Jesus is to do the will of God, and accordingly, "following the true way of Israel."[458] Their praxis involved new standards of conduct, defined in pericopes such as Jesus' Sermon on the Mount which articulated life under the new covenant in the kingdom of

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[453] Wright, *People of God*, 386.
[454] Ibid., 388.
[455] Ibid.
[456] Wright, *Victory of God*, 275. (Wright's emphasis)
[457] Wright (Ibid., 646) notes the high Christology implied in the Synoptic literature since "Loyalty to Israel's god, astonishingly, would now take the form of loyalty to Jesus."
[458] Ibid., 278.

God. Different however from the previous "Law" which was exterior to humanity, Jesus' desired an interior renovation or a change of heart upon which God's Law is inscribed. This is characterized as the "new covenant" which mitigates the old covenant that had proven ineffective as evidenced by the nation's cyclical rebellion.[459] Under this new covenant, they were to forgive other's debts as their debts were forgiven. Forgiveness, then, Wright contends, is "the hallmark of all social relationships," and a "new way of being Israel."[460]

Those who have their sins forgiven are "delivered from exile," and enter the kingdom of God in Matthew's Gospel. Conversely, those who reject God's kingdom, that is, the gospel Jesus proclaims, remain in their sin, and will experience God's "judgment" and the "coming disaster." Jesus' parable in Matt. 7:24-27 is indicative of this prophetic theme which contrasts those who hear and obey God's word with the intransigent that reject the gospel. The former will reside in God's kingdom while the latter will remain alienated. Parables such as these, according to Wright, are consonant with Second Temple eschatology in which the people of God, or his "elect," are rewarded for their fidelity, and vindicated through the destruction of their enemies. Second Temple literature, according to Wright, such as Micah who writes, "I must bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he takes my side and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall see his vindication" (7:9), informs the Gospel writers' conception of sin, salvation, and vindication. Jesus' warnings of impending destruction to the towns of Chorazin and Bethsaida are for their failure

[459] Jesus, Wright states, was not replacing the former covenant with a new covenant since the "covenant god" would be "contradicting himself." Rather, Jesus was calling Israel to follow the deeper meaning of the law that was heretofore grasped only superficially. Wright refers to this a "Torah-intensification" and cannot be considered a pretext for supersessionism.

[460] Wright, *Victory of God*, 290.

repent and believe the gospel (e.g., Matt. 11:21) are evocative of stories "routinely told within Judaism," Wright states, in which God saves and vindicates his people, and the consequences of those who oppress and reject God's elect and his message. Vindication in the Gospels has the two-fold effect of fulfilling prophecy and differentiating between believers and nonbelievers. The former experience God's forgiveness of sin and new life in the kingdom, while the latter incur God's wrath are exiled from his presence. Matthew's hamartiology, soteriology, and eschatology, like other early church writers, are all influenced by Second Temple thought which illustrate unequivocally that forgiveness of sin is a necessary prerequisite to entering God's kingdom and this reconciliation comes through God's Messiah, Jesus.

The kingdom of God is likewise a central theme in the Gospel of Mark, and the forgiveness of sins a necessary prerequisite for citizenship. Familiar themes in Luke and Matthew such as the necessity of repentance, belief in the gospel, and the importance of situating this message of salvation and its messenger, Jesus the Messiah, in the prophetic literature of the Second Temple are all essential to Mark's Gospel. Similarly, the call to repent that is located at the onset of Mark presupposes an anthropology that is characterized by sin, and therefore in a state of exile. Distinct to Mark is his frequent use of apocalyptic language dedicating a full chapter at times (Mark 13) to explicating this theme. The eschatological narratives in Mark apparently subvert Second Temple Judaism's expectation of future vindication by their coming messiah since Jesus' predicts the impending destruction of the Temple, and the desolation of Jerusalem because of their rejection of God's Messiah whom they will put to death.[461] Yet it is the death of Jesus,

[461] Wright, *People of God*, 395.

paradoxically, that secures Israel's liberation, not from Roman oppression as they anticipated, but from sin which has held them in captivity.

Although Jesus' death initiated "a worldwide announcement of the 'good news,'" Wright suggests that the Synoptic literature is void of any resemblance to later Christian "atonement theology" that is void of the political implications associated with the cross.[462] Rather, "Jesus understood his death as being organically linked with the fate of the nation. He was dying as the rejected king, taking Israel's suffering upon himself."[463] The riddles of "The Green Tree and the Dry" (Luke 23:27-31), "The Hen and the Chickens" (Matt. 23:37-39), and "The Baptism and the Cup" (Luke 12:49-50) are all "bound up both with the fate of the whole nation and with the coming of the new exodus in which YHWH would at last establish his kingdom."[464] That is, Jesus, instead of "offering an abstract atonement theology," his death is to be construed in the Gospels as his identification "with the sufferings of Israel."[465] Similar to the prophets of God that preceded him, Jesus believed that it was his vocation, in accordance with God's will, to "[draw] the wrath of God upon [himself]" thereby "suffering in the place of Israel."[466] Among the historical prophets, there was a common belief that "obedient suffering and death might actually atone for the sins of the people."[467]

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[462] Wright, *Victory of God*, 574.

[463] Ibid., 570.

[464] Ibid., 574.

[465] Ibid., 592.

[466] N. T. Wright, "Jesus," in *Early Christian Thought in Its Jewish Context*, eds. John Barclay and John Sweet (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 54. Wright notes, that "wrath" of God in the Second Temple context was construed as "a very concrete, historical thing [non-abstract] as for instance in 2 Kings 3:27, where 'great wrath came upon Israel' means, basically, 'Israel were heavily defeated in battle."

[467] Wright, "Jesus," 54. Wright (Ibid.,56) further notes that "Jesus had available to him various interlocking beliefs which could have informed his own sense of vocation [show which!], and pointed him to his own execution at the hand of pagan rulers as the necessary mode and means of Israel's redemption."

Yet the death of a prophet is not to be construed in soteriological terms alone but it also has political implications. Wright therefore distinguishes between first century Judaism's view of the cross through the lens of the Synoptic tradition, and that of atonement theology in Paul.[468] Wright states,

> It is the entire Gospel narrative, rather than any of its possible fragmented parts, that we see that complete, many sided kingdom work taking shape. And this narrative, read this way, resists deconstruction into power games precisely because of its insistence on the cross. The rulers of the world behave one way, declared Jesus, but you are to behave another way, because the Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom form many. We discover that so-called atonement theology within that statement of so-called political theology. To state either without the other is to resist the integration, the God-in-public narrative, which the Gospels persist in presenting.[469]

Concerning the question, "Why did Jesus die?" Wright answers, "because he believed it was his vocation."[470] His death, then, is the inevitable outcome of his calling to be a prophet. The implications of Jesus' death then were twofold. Since "Jesus saw himself as a prophet announcing and inaugurating the kingdom of YHWH [and] he believed himself to be Israel's true Messiah; he believed that the kingdom would be brought about by means of his own death."[471] The cross then necessarily had implications for "political theology." Yet, because Jesus' death procured God's forgiveness of Israel's sin, and consequently Israel's return from exile, his death also had implications for "atonement theology."[472] From the Synoptic literature, consequently, atonement and political

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[468] Wright identifies Christian atonement theology as the "post-Easter rethinking of Jesus' essentially pre-Easter understanding" of his death. Wright, *Victory of God*, 592.

[469] Wright, "Kingdom Come: The Public meaning of the Gospels," 30.

[470] Wright, *Victory of God*, 593. Wright suggests that the death of Jesus, like many prophets who used subversive language that predate him, was a consequence of following God's will and proclaiming that truth to his first-century context. Although he was aware that his death was inevitable he did not construe it, according to the evidence presented in the Gospels, the way many later atonement theorists would argue as 'the sacrificial death for the forgiveness of sins.' Wright, "Jesus," 54.

[471] Wright, *Victory of God*, 612.

[472] Implications of politics and atonement are fused since Jesus "announced the forgiveness of sins" which "indicated that he was in some sense bypassing the whole Temple cult." Wright, *Victory of*

theology regarding the cross are not mutually exclusive but are to be held in proper tension.

Although variances appear among Matthew, Mark, and Luke regarding the details of the events of Jesus' ministry particularly the cross, they present a consistent narrative. Wright notes,

> [The Synoptic Gospels] share the common pattern behind their wide divergences. All tell the story of Jesus, and especially that of his cross, not as an oddity, one-off biography of strange doings, or a sudden irruption of divine power into history, but as the end of a much longer story, the story of Israel, which in turn is the focal point of the story of the creator and the world.[473]

The cross is essential in the Gospel narrative which suggests that the forgiveness of sin is important theme since it is offered to humanity through the Messiah's death. Yet the authors of the Synoptic literature were writing neither history nor strictly theology but were concerned with relating the gospel story to others whose central figure is Jesus of Nazareth. The Gospel authors were composing a narrative from the perspective of their experience of salvation, and cared most to relate what they have received to their audience. These works "were written to invite readers to enter a worldview," Wright suggests, in which "there is one god, the creator of the world, who is at work in his world through his chosen people, Israel. Israel's purpose, say the evangelists, is now complete, and her own long bondage ended, in Jesus."[474] Jesus, then, brought the Jewish story to its "climax" since through the cross Israel's sin is forgiven, their exile is over, and they, along with the Gentile world, have been redeemed by the Messiah. Jesus' death which is

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God, 647. (Reference Matt. 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26, 7:48). Sanders (*The Historical Figure of Jesus*, 260) highlights the additional political implication in Jesus' ministry regarding his disposition regarding practices at the Temple. He writes, "I conclude that Jesus' symbolic action of overthrowing tables in the Temple [Mark 11:15] was understood in connection with a saying about destruction [Mark 13:2], and that the action and the saying, in the view of the authorities, constituted a prophetic threat."

[473] Wright, *People of God*, 396.

[474] Ibid., 403.

central to the soteriological narrative in the Gospels therefore "is to be understood not as the execution of an awkward figure who refused to stop rocking the first-century Jewish or Roman boat, but as the saving divine act whereby the sins of the world were dealt with once and for all."[475]

3.1.4. Paul on Second Temple Judaism and Salvation in Christ

Apart from the Synoptic literature, Wright considers the writings of Paul to be an invaluable source for reconstructing the early church's worldview, particularly their understanding of themes such as sin and forgiveness, and for demonstrating its congruence with Second Temple thought. Similar to the Gospel writers, "Paul's story is essentially the Jewish story,"[476] and his narrative is situated in Jewish theology particularly in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians. Throughout Paul's letters, consonant with the Gospel narrative, Israel's hopes are realized, and their awaited kingdom is at hand in the coming of their Messiah, Jesus. In Jesus "Israel's history" is brought "to its appointed destiny," and "who as Messiah summed up Israel in himself."[477] Routine soteriological themes in the Gospels such as "Israel's hope," "the resurrection from the dead," "the return from exile," "the forgiveness of sins," that "had all come true in a rush in Jesus, who had been crucified," are all reinforced in the Pauline epistles.[478]

The notion of "redemption" though is of particular importance to Paul's theology of the cross, and therefore receives comparatively more attention. Paul, who situates his thought within Jewish theology, believed that "what God did in the cross and resurrection

[475] Wright, *Victory of God*, 56.
[476] Wright, *People of God*, 405.
[477] Ibid., 447.
[478] Ibid., 452.

of the Messiah, and the gift of the Spirit, was what he had promised Abraham he would do."[479] The term "redemption" in Paul, according to Wright, is understood as "God rescues human beings, and (if we are being biblical) the whole cosmos, from the state of sin, decay, and death to which they have become subject,"[480] The term redemption relative to the cross is given an "Exodus-interpretation" since it is to be viewed in the context of Second Temple thought, namely that "human beings in the present, and the whole creation in the future, are rescued from slavery to sin and death as Israel was rescued from slavery in Egypt."[481] In Romans for instance, Jesus' "redeeming death (3:24-26) is the means of God's now declaring that all who share his faith are the 'righteous,' that is, members of the sin-forgiven family (3:27-31), and that this is how God has fulfilled the Abrahamic promises (4:1-25)."[482] Galatians expresses the idea of the cross as "substitution" since Jesus by dying takes upon himself the "curse of exile," which removes not only Israel's sin but the sin of the world.[483] This is evident in Paul's words in Gal. 1:3-4, "our Lord Jesus the Messiah gave himself for ours sins, to deliver us from the present evil age according to the will of God our Father."[484] Important in this passage is Paul's reference that the death of Jesus for sin which is consonant with his

[479] N. T. Wright, "Redemption from the New Perspective? Towards a Multi-Layered Pauline Theology of the Cross," in *Redemption*, eds. S. T. Davis, D. Kendall, G. O'Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2006, 78.

[480] Wright, "Redemption from the New Perspective?," 80.

[481] Ibid.

[482] Ibid., 85. A. Katherine Grieb, notes that Paul's use of the term "redemption" is drawing upon the commercial language of an Old Testament metaphor found in Leviticus in regard to the purchasing back of a family member in danger or a plot of land (25:25, 47-55; 27:19) or the "redeemer of blood" of a family member (Num. 35:9-28; Deut. 19:6-13; Josh. 20:2-9). A. Katherine Grieb, *The Story of Romans: A Narrative Defense of God's Righteousness* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 38.

[483] Wright ("Redemption from the New Perspective?," 85), notes, "In Galatians, more specifically, the curse of the exile which had bottled up the promises and prevented them getting through to the Gentiles, leaving Israel itself under condemnation, is dealt with by the death of Jesus: he takes Israel's curse upon himself (and thus, at one remove, the world's curse."

[484] Wright's translation of Gal. 1:3-4.

other letters and "the central statement of the common early creed."[485] This theme is expressed fully in 1 Corinthians, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (15:3). This passage is indispensable since it demonstrates that Paul is concerned to situate his conception of the cross in early church theology that is grounded in Second Temple soteriology, and confirms that his view of the atonement is not a late eccentric construct but consistent with the biblical narrative.

Paul's distinct contribution to New Testament soteriology is his background as a Pharisee (Phil. 3:5; Acts 23:6; 26:5) which, according to Wright, informs his atonement theology. Paul's epistles therefore are analyzed by Wright through the hermeneutical lens of the "Pharisaic theology" which is pervasive in Second Temple literature.[486] Three basic categories that define Pharisaic theology are "monotheism, election, and eschatology" which correspond to "One God; one people of God; one future for God's world" respectively.[487] Different however is Paul's inclusion of the Gentile community in this narrative which contradicts the narrow construal of Pharisaic soteriology which contended that God's salvation was for Israel alone. One of Paul's "basic presumptions," then, is that "Israel *had* now been redeemed, and that the time for the Gentiles had therefore come."[488] Paul situates his inclusive soteriology on the primary tenets of Second Temple thought, such as the belief in one God who is creator of the universe who is both "good and wise." Further that the fall of humanity came through Adam, and that

[485] Wright, "Redemption from the New Perspective?," 85.

[486] N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, vol. 4, *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 179. Wright acknowledges however that the suggestion that the theology of the Pharisees during the Second Temple period was not monolithic since it was often divided along sectarian lines of the competing schools of Hillel and Shammai.

[487] Ibid., 179.

[488] Wright, *People of God*, 445. (Wright's emphasis)

Abraham is "the beginning of the divine answer to the problem" he had introduced into the world through his disobedience.[489] Paul's narrative though subverts the Jewish notion that Abraham was the father of their nation only, believing rather that the covenantal promises was meant for the people of the world. His view of the Torah is also considered subversive to Pharisaical thought since instead of construing it exclusively positivistic terms as a "great gift," he believes that it also functions to "*convict Israel of sin*, so that Israel should be cast away in order that the world might be redeemed."[490] In accordance with the Second Temple worldview, Paul believes that Israel remains in exile because of their sin. The Torah offered Israel the alternatives of life and death. They chose the latter, and were sent into captivity in fulfillment of the prophets whom they rejected. Yet through God's prophesied Messiah their exile came to an end,

> when Jesus, Israel's representative Messiah, died outside the walls of Jerusalem, bearing the curse, which consisted of exile at the hands of the pagans, to its utmost limit. The return from exile began when Jesus, again as the representative Messiah, emerged from the tomb three days later…[Through the cross and resurrection of Jesus,] Israel's god had poured out his own spirit on all flesh; his word was going out to the nations; he had called into being a new people composed of all races and classes, and both sexes without distinction. [491]

Although Paul's theology begins with the Second Temple soteriology, the means through which their expectations would be realized contradicted their eschatology. This is particularly true regarding the fate of their Messiah who had to die to conquer their most formidable enemy, namely, human sin.[492]

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[489] Wright, *People of God*, 405.

[490] Ibid., 406. (Wright's emphasis) Rom. 9:14-29 for Wright is indicative of this view.

[491] Ibid. Wright (Ibid.) continues, "Paul's notion of how the exile came to an end subverted the indicators of the end of the exile from the perspective of many of the Jewish people of the Second Temple period. The indicators that the exile was over were essentially a restoration of their primary symbols, "cleansed Land, rebuilt Temple, and intensified Torah."

[492] On the topic of how New Testament reflection on the cross contradicted Second Temple expectations of the work of the Messiah, Joel Marcus writes, "From a very early stage of its existence, the church would have required an explanation for the fact that Jesus, whom it proclaimed to be the Messiah,

Wright sees the controverting of Pharisaic expectations, then, as a common theme in Paul's work. For instance, the triad of Pharisaic theology, monotheism, election, and eschatology, are, according to Wright, "freshly revealed"[493] in light of their fulfillment in the Messiah Jesus. Monotheism for example is "redrawn around Jesus" in passages such as Rom. 9:5, "to [the Israelites] belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ. God who is over all be blessed for ever. Amen." The name "Messiah" and "God" are equivalent in this passage which suggests that Jesus, "*theos*," is the God of Israel.[494] This is reiterated in passages such as 1 Cor. 8:6 which is a reinterpretation of the Shema, "yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist." Second Temple monotheism is also reworked around the Messiah Jesus in the "Christ Hymn" of Philippians 2, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men…." The reworking of these concepts around Jesus is not strictly a Pauline construct, Wright notes, rather, "*Jesus' first followers found themselves not only (as it were) permitted to use God-language for Jesus, but compelled to use Jesus-*

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the expected King of Israel, had finished his life on a Roman cross, abandoned by his followers. Messiahs were not supposed to end up like this—though several would-be messiahs did—but were to overthrow the yoke of pagan oppression through the power of God and to lead Israel to national liberation and world rulership as well as spiritual rejuvenation. Even some Gentiles knew that Jesus did not fit the standard messianic pattern." Joel Marcus, "The Role of Scripture in the Gospel Passion Narratives," in *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity*, eds. John T. Carroll and Joel B. Green (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 205.

[493] Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 644.

[494] Ibid., 707. Wright (Ibid.) discusses the controversy surrounding this "traditional" interpretation, above, of Rom 9:5. He notes however that this "view has gradually gained ground among translators and commentators that the 'traditional' interpretation is right after all: the final clause [of v.5] really does say 'who is over all God,' and really does ascribe that to the Messiah."

language for the one God."[495] In fact, Wright contends, all of the "central christological passages" in the New Testament "offer a very high, completely Jewish, and extremely early christology." [496] For instance, Paul's view of the person of Christ is consonant with the high Christology of the Johannine prologue, and the salutation in Hebrews, both of which are referential to the "Wisdom tradition" of the Old Testament.[497] In Paul's letters this understanding of the Messiah "emerges as already fully formed."[498] The high Christology intimated in the Gospels is more pronounced in Paul. This is essential since it is YHWH, according to the Second Temple view, who forgives Israel's sin, which redeems them from captivity to the evil powers, which convokes the new exodus.

This reworking of monotheism in Pharisaical theology around the Messiah Jesus, constitutes, for Wright, Paul's "new exodus-theology" that appears in pericopes such as Romans 8,

> There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (vv. 1-4).

This passage reveals Paul's redefinition of the category of election around Jesus the Messiah. For Paul, the Messiah in Romans 8, according to Wright, "represents Israel, which in turn represents the whole human race."[499] Yet the Messiah does what humanity did not, that is, avoid sin, defined as, "idolatry and immortality."[500] Since punishment is the consequence of sin, the Messiah "takes the role" of humanity on the cross and dies

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[495] Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 655. (Wright's emphasis)
[496] N. T. Wright, "Jesus and the Identity of God," *Ex Auditu* 14 (1998): 46.
[497] Ibid., 48.
[498] Ibid.
[499] Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 898.
[500] Ibid., 840.

the death they deserved.[501] Jesus' obedience, even to death on the cross, kept the covenant Israel had broken with God, and their election to be a light to the nations.[502] Those that are "in" the Messiah through "faith" (*pistis*), either Jew or Gentile, are now counted among the elect or the "new people of God" who, in turn are to proclaim the way of salvation the rest of the world.[503] Soteriological concepts such as of "representation," "substitution," and "judicial punishment" are all present in Romans 8, and are instrumental for understanding Paul's atonement theology and, accordingly, that of the biblical narrative.

The final category of Pharisaical theology's triad, eschatology, is also "freshly imagined" by Paul, according to Wright, in light of Jesus the Messiah. Yet "the end" appears at the midpoint of time for Paul since the new exodus has been manifested through the Messiah Jesus.[504] Paul's realized eschatology, then, is to be differentiated from the "last days" (2 Tim. 3:1) when God's plan for the world will be completed through the judgment of the nations, and the restoration of God's original plan for creation.

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[501] Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 898. Salvation was therefore on a national rather than a personal scale. "Jesus did, as Paul says, die for our sins, but his whole agenda of dealing with sin and all its effects and consequences was never about rescuing individual souls from the world but about saving humans so that they could become part of his project of saving the world." Wright, "Kingdom Come: The Public meaning of the Gospels," 30.

[502] For writers such as Paul, "all the principalities and powers of world rulership exist at Christ's behest, were defeated on his cross, and are now under his authority" (Wright, *People of God*, 460.) This view is corroborated by other New Testament literature such as Matthew which affirms that "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18).and, accordingly, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11).

[503] Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 838.

[504] Fredriksen (*Sin: The Early History of an Idea*, 39) has a similar interpretation of Paul's eschatology, "Christ's death as sin sacrifice, and spirit giving baptism into his death [according to Paul], releases some small portion of humanity now. (In Romans, Paul will refer to this portion as a 'remnant…chosen by grace' when he designates Jews [11.5], and as 'those who have attained righteousness' when he refers to baptized gentiles [8:30].) And then at the End, to the sound of the heavenly trumpet, the returning Christ will descend 'with a cry of command' (1 Thes 4.16) to triumph once for all over Sin, Flesh, and Death."

Paul's redefinition of eschatology, election, and monotheism around Jesus the Messiah is comparatively more developed yet consonant with Synoptic literature. Together these themes comprise a single narrative, that is,

> The Israel-story, fulfilled, subverted and transformed by the Jesus-story…In its new form, it generates and sustains a symbolic universe, in which the writers of epistles and gospels alike understand themselves and their readers as living: the world in which this fulfilled Israel-drama is now moving towards its closure, its still unreached ending.[505]

To properly interpret and appropriate New Testament soteriology, an adequate view of Second Temple theology is a necessary prerequisite. That is, one must think "Jewishly," Wright suggests, for properly discerning the early church's view of the cross.[506] Further, understanding that this narrative is composed from the perspective of their experience of salvation is also important since it informs their Christology, ecclesiology, ethics, and eschatology. All New Testament authors, Wright concludes, "*told, and lived, a form of Israel's story which reached its climax in Jesus and which then issued in their spirit-given new life and task*."[507]

3.2 Soteriology in New Testament Theology: The Work of Frank J. Matera

Wright's study of Second Temple soteriology is valuable for situating the New Testament's theology of the cross since it offers continuity to the ongoing story of salvation that underlies the biblical narrative. Understanding this unified narrative is essential since it functions as a corrective against misinterpreting or misappropriating the words and actions of Jesus, and the New Testament writers who reflected upon them, because they have been removed from their wider Jewish context. Similar to Wright,

[505] Wright, *People of God*, 409.
[506] Ibid., 427.
[507] Ibid., 456. (Wright's emphasis)

Matera concludes that the soteriological story in Scripture informs all of the early church authors who are writing from the perspective of their own "experience of salvation God has effected in Christ."[508] Their primary concern, accordingly, was to convey to their readers the necessity of having their sins forgiven, which is the prerequisite for being "saved." Despite their diversity, Matera contends, there is unity among not only New Testament anthropology marked by human sin, as delineated in the previous chapter of this project, but also soteriology, or how sin is forgiven. There is a basic consensus among the early church writers that "Jesus is the bringer of salvation because he is the one whom God has chosen, designated, and sent into the world…and through him God provides the definitive remedy for the plight that affects the human condition."[509]

Since soteriology is the foundational theme of Matera's five-part thematic structure,[510] an accurate study of how sins are forgiven is imperative for understanding the New Testament's master story. Similar to his study of Christian anthropology, Matera's analysis of early church soteriology begins with the Synoptic Gospel tradition, followed by the Pauline and Johannine traditions, and the "Other Voices."

3.2.1. The Synoptic Tradition on the Forgiveness of Sin

Martin Kähler has written that "one could call the Gospels passion narratives written with extended introductions."[511] Matera's study of soteriology in the Gospels

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[508] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, xxviii.

[509] Ibid., 437.

[510] Matera's five-part thematic structure is comprised of: "(1) humanity in need of salvation; (2) the bringer of salvation; (3) the community of the sanctified; (4) the moral life of the sanctified; (5) the hope of the sanctified." Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 428.

[511] Martin Kähler, *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ*, trans. Carl E. Braaten (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 80 (fn.11). Kähler (Ibid.) further explains, "Mark 8:27 to 9:13, the group of events from Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi to the transfiguration on the mountain," for instance, "shows clearly where the emphasis lies for the narrator. By the seventh chapter John is up to

confirms this view since the passion narratives are likewise revealed as essential since they collectively "[portray] Jesus as the obedient Son of God who pours out his blood for the forgiveness of sins."[512] Common to the diversity among the Gospel writers, and the remaining books that comprise the New Testament, is their conception that the cross which is perceived as the vehicle through which humanity is reconciled to God. Similar to the conclusion of Wright, Matera contends that Jesus' primary focus was to proclaim this message of salvation which is the "good news" that the kingdom of God has arrived in his ministry.[513] Apart from the gospel, Matera contends, the severity of the human situation would be imperceptible. Matera writes,

> Jesus' gospel of the kingdom effects salvation and reveals that human condition. On the one hand, he offers people a concrete experience of what it is like to live in the sphere of God's rule where people are reconciled to God and to one another because they acknowledge God's rule over their lives. When Jesus heals the physical ills of his contemporaries, frees them from Satan's bondage, forgives their sins, and raises the dead, they experience the kingdom of God. On the other hand, the salvation the kingdom brings exposes the human condition. Apart from the kingdom, people find themselves alienated from God and in profound need of forgiveness.[514]

The gospel, or good news, therefore has the dual function of unmasking the human condition marked by sin and their need of forgiveness, and identifying the solution which is the cross of Christ.

Jesus' last stay in Judea, if one subtracts from Matthew the infancy narratives and the three collections of sayings, seven chapters in all, then the situation is the same as in Mark."

[512] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 42. Morna Hooker states "that the death of Jesus lies at the heart of the Christian gospel, and therefore the New Testament…The fact that Jesus has died can hardly be described as good news; the belief that he died for our sins is." Morna D. Hooker, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel: New Testament Interpretations of the Death of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 7.

[513] Matera distinguishes between the "gospel" as the "good news" and the "Gospel" as a literary genre. The later, because it is a proper noun, is therefore capitalized throughout his work and, accordingly, in this project.

[514] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 429.

3.2.1.1. The Good News in Mark

The salutation in the Gospel of Mark, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1), operates as a thesis statement in his work since the "good news" *is* "Jesus Christ, the Son of God," and his subsequent narrative discloses this reality. Jesus in the opening chapter states, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel" (1:15). "By this announcement," Matera states, "Jesus summons his contemporaries to reform their lives in light of the in-breaking kingdom of God, and he implicitly claims an authority to discern God's will."[515] The "good news," according to Mark, "is God's victory in and through Christ, which brings salvation to humanity."[516] The gospel, then, "responds to a profound need for healing and forgiveness" evidenced by the many people who "approach Jesus with faith in his power to save them" [2:5; 5:34]."[517] Mark's gospel begins with "John the baptizer" who "appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (1:4). This "good news" is preached at the beginning of the Gospel by John, then becomes the central message of Jesus' ministry throughout the narrative, and culminates with his commission to his disciples, "'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (16:15-16).[518] Belief in the gospel and belief in Jesus are identical (8:35; 10:29), Matera notes. Two types of people, then, emerge in Mark, those

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[515] Frank J. Matera, "'He Saved Others; He Cannot Save Himself:' A Literary-Critical Perspective on the Markan Miracles," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible Theology* 47, no. 1 (1993): 16.

[516] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 8. The notion of "gospel" (*euangelion*) is an essential concept in Mark appearing on eight different occasions (1:1, 14, 15 ; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15). Only Paul employs this term with greater frequency. The "good news" is narrowly defined by Matera as the kingdom of God.

[517] Ibid., 429.

[518] Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 21. Matera (Ibid.) further notes, "Although the specific vocabulary of repentance does not occur frequently in Mark's Gospel, the need for people to repent is central to his narrative."

who accept the good news of salvation and life in the kingdom of God, and those who reject this gracious offer. The former receive the forgiveness of sin, reconciliation with God, and eternal life in God's kingdom, while the later, because they remain in sin, are separated from God, and, unapologetically for Mark, "thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (9:47-48).

Among Jesus' various works in Mark, exorcising demons, calming a storm, raising the dead, and healing the sick and infirmed, his forgiveness of sins is paramount since it distinguishes him from prophets such as Elijah who performed similar miracles as God's agent. The forgiveness Jesus offers signifies that his work is not on behalf of God but *as* God since only God forgive sins. Mark's high Christology is revealed in the second chapter when Jesus says to the paralytic whom he heals, "'My son, your sins are forgiven" (v.5) to which the scribes respond "'Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?'" (v.7). Charges of blasphemy on identical grounds appears again at the end of Mark when Jesus responds affirmatively to the interrogatory question of the high priest, "'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?'" to which Jesus states, "'I am; and you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven'" (14:61-62). "Jesus Christ, the Son of God," for Mark, offers humanity something Israel's anointed kings and prophets that preceded him could not, that is the forgiveness of sin, and it is forgiveness that effects reconciliation which is central to the gospel.

Christology is inextricably tied to soteriology in Mark since his presentation of Jesus as the "Spirit-anointed Son of God" would be intelligible or "inadequate" if viewed

apart from his "destiny" as the Messiah whose mission is to preach God's kingdom and effected through his death, resurrection, and future return.[519] Matera further explains,

> The person of Jesus, his identity, and saving work are irrevocably linked to the message he preaches about the kingdom of God. To know who Jesus is and what he has done is to understand the nature of the kingdom whose coming he heralds. To comprehend the mystery of the kingdom is to recognize his identity and his saving work. Therefore, just as the Markan Gospel presents the kingdom as a mystery that can be understood only by those to whom the mystery is given, so there is a mystery about Jesus' identity that is revealed only to those who believe that the crucified One is the messianic Son of God, whose destiny of the Son of Man, who must suffer, die, and rise from the dead before returning to his Father's glory.[520]

The intersection of Christology and soteriology is most noticeable at the midpoint of Mark's Gospel when Jesus' identity as "the Christ" is revealed (8:29), and his destiny predicted, namely that he will be "killed, and after three days rise again" (8:31). The "person" of the Messiah then is defined by his "work" that is to give his life as a ransom for many (10:45). This signifies explicitly that Jesus' death is primarily redemptive.[521]

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[519] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 12. Thielman (*Theology of the New Testament*, 66) notes however that there is a clear distinction in the emphasis Mark places on the death of Jesus in his Gospel in comparison to his resurrection. He writes, "Although it is an exaggeration that Mark's gospel is a passion narrative with a long introduction, no sensitive reader of Mark's gospel can miss the emphasis that Mark places on the death of Jesus." At the onset of the Gospel in Mark 1:14, John the Baptist's arrest is a foreshadowing of what will happen to Jesus. His life is threatened when he is accused of blasphemy, according to the Law (2:7 [based on Lev. 2:16]). The Pharisees, Thielman notes, plot his death in 8:31 and "like the tolling of a bell" Jesus predicts his coming demise in 9:31; 10:33-34. Mark offers comparatively many details when the moment of Jesus' arrest and death occurs (e.g., 14:33, 50, 51, 57). Thielman (Ibid., 67) further notes that "Mark's focus on Jesus' death is also clear from the brevity of the attention he gives to the resurrection (16:1-8). The resurrection is important for Mark (8:31; 9-9, 31; 10:34; 16:6), but he recounts no resurrection appearances, and even in the one verse that he devotes to the resurrection (16:6), the focus is somehow still on the crucifixion."

[520] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 15. The "work" of Christ therefore is distinguishable from the "person" of Christ since the former soteriology latter relates to Christology. This corroborates Matera's thesis that the theological category of soteriology must precede Christology.

[521] G. E. Ladd in his New Testament theology writes, "The redemptive significance of Jesus' death is seen in the ransom saying that the Son of Man will give his life (*psychē*) for many. The first is that the life (*psychē*) of an individual can be lost or forfeited. 'For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?' When a person's life has been lost, there is no possible way of buying it back. No price will prove sufficient to redeem it. The entire world does not possess sufficient value to ransom a life when it has become forfeited. Viewing the lives of the many as forfeited, Jesus would give his life to redeem them." George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, Revised Edition, ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1993), 187.

This notion is expressed explicitly by his words at the "Last Supper" when Jesus states that redemption will be effected through the pouring out of his blood on the cross (14:24).[522] These two occurrences are critical for understanding Mark's theology of the cross since they describe the meaning of Christ's death.[523] Redemption, which brings reconciliation, or makes "atonement," is the primary objective of the cross, then, according to Mark.

3.2.1.2. The Forgiveness of Debt in the Gospel of Matthew

In Matthew, the central narrative of God's kingdom in Mark is affirmed with only a change in semantics from the "kingdom of God" to the "kingdom of "heaven."[524] Matera writes that Matthew is "essentially faithful to his predecessor's understanding of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, whose destiny is that of the Son of Man who must suffer, die, and rise from the dead before returning as the glorious Son of Man."[525] Like Mark, Matera notes, in Matthew, "[people] experience the salvation the kingdom brings through the forgiveness of sins and the healing God offers through Jesus' ministry. Those who believe see the hidden presence of God's rule and understand that the kingdom of God is in their midst."[526] Among the leading characteristics of the kingdom, then, is that

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[522] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 25. Thielman (*Theology of the New Testament*, 71) further suggests that the Messiah's death "atoned for his sin, and, Mark seems to say, Jesus' death atoned for all those who have failed to obey God but who are willing to accept in faith that Jesus died for them. As Jesus himself puts it 'I have not come to call the righteous sinners' (2:17)."

[523] G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 185. Ladd (Ibid., 185-186) notes that Jesus' words in Mark 10:45 are "often attributed to Pauline influence in the later formation of the gospel tradition, but there is no good reason for rejecting it authenticity [since] 'Anyone who regards the nucleus of the Eucharistic words as genuine will have no hesitation in deriving the substance of this logion from Jesus.'" (Citation from Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology* [New York: Scribner Publishing, 1971], 294.)

[524] Matthew's phrase, "kingdom of heaven," Matera (*New Testament Theology*, 27) notes, is likely a "Semitic circumlocution for the kingdom of God, which was probably current in the community for which Matthew wrote."

[525] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 27.

[526] Ibid., 429.

"people are reconciled to God" through the forgiveness of their sin.[527] Like Mark, emphasis is placed therefore on the dichotomization between the penitent and impenitent, the former "believe the good news—that the kingdom has drawn near in the life and ministry of Jesus" and are consequently "saved," while the latter who reject the gospel are "cast into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."[528] This theme appears with greater frequency in Mathew since it is the subject of many of Jesus' parables such as the two different types of people among day laborers, (22:1-14), wedding guests (20:1-16), and bridesmaids (25:1-13). There is a major disparity therefore is between those who do God's will and those who do not since the former go "away into eternal punishment," while the latter "righteous into eternal life" (25:46).

The vocation of the Messiah in Matthew is announced even before he is born, since he is to be named "Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (1:21). Further, he "'shall be called Emmanuel' (which means, God with us)" (1:23). Similar to Mark, Christology is intelligible only in light of soteriology in Matthew, and both are presented at the in the opening chapter of his Gospel. The presuppositions of the work and person of the Messiah are essential since they make the "plot" of Matthew's narrative more comprehensible to his readers. This plot involves a conflict between those for and against the mission of the Messiah. Matera explains,

> God sends Jesus to save his people from their sins by inaugurating the kingdom of heaven. Jesus will accomplish this through his ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing, and by shedding his blood for the forgiveness of sins. Aware that the kingdom of heaven will destroy his rule, Satan tries to prevent Jesus from accomplishing this mission.[529]

[527] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 429.
[528] Ibid., 29.
[529] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 27.

Those who try to prevent "Jesus from his God-appointed destiny to suffer and die on the cross (16:22),"[530] thereby taking the side of Satan, include the Pharisees (12:27), those in the world who belong to the "sons of the evil one" (13:38), and even Peter (16:23). "Despite these attempts by others to frustrate his mission," Matera notes, "Jesus [nonetheless] saves his people from their sins by dying on the cross."[531] The Messiah's death in addition to fulfilling prophecy (1:21), establishes a new covenant since his blood "is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (26:28).[532] The death of the Messiah is not coerced since he is aware that it is his foreordained mission, evident by his affirmation that he came for the salvation of "sinners" (9:13).[533]

Sin, for Matthew, as Anderson as suggested, is construed as a "debt" owed to God. This is apparent in the prayer Jesus teaches his disciples, that they ask God that he forgive their "debts" as they forgive their "debtors" (6:12). This metaphor is given greater expression in Jesus' subsequent parable of the servant, whose debt is forgiven by the king (18:23-35). Jesus' parable illustrates the human predicament because "there is no way to pay the almost infinite amount owed (so too is sin an infinite offense against the infinite

[530] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 27.

[531] Ibid., 28.

[532] Matthew's statement "for the forgiveness of sins" is an amendment to the "Eucharistic Prayer" in Mark 14:24, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." This addition however is not at variance to Mark's thought according to Marshall (New Testament Theology, 110) who contends that Matthew in this passage "makes explicit what is implicit in the Markan account." Hooker (*Not Ashamed of the Gospel*, 71) concerning this passage notes that "we have here one of the rare statements in the gospels that attempts to explain what the death of Christ achieved."

[533] Thielman (*Theology of the New Testament*, 66) states that the Messiah's mission is traceable back to Old Testament prophecy. He writes, "Both Mark and Matthew emphasize the atoning significance of Jesus' death. The most prominent vehicle for communicating this concept in both authors is the description of the Suffering Servant in the fourth Servant Song (Isa. 52:13-53:12). The pattern of the Servant's suffering follows a familiar structure for atoning suffering in antiquity: One who is innocent (53:9) voluntary (53:7b) takes on himself or herself the suffering that a guilty person deserves (53:4-6), and God accepts this person's death as a 'guilt offering' for their sin (53:10-12). Unlike the pattern as it is often expressed in ancient literature outside the Scriptures, however, in the biblical pattern God initiates the process of atonement and provides the sacrifice (53:10)."

God, an offence we cannot possibly undo by ourselves."[534] Further, "since the debt is unpayable, the imprisonment will be eternal (18:8)."[535] Yet God's forgiveness of sin is equally evident in this parable, which, according to Matthew, "is effected by Jesus' obediently surrendering his life on the cross."[536] Since paying for humanity's sin-debt is extremely costly to God, in gratitude, the forgiven are to forgive the debt of others despite the cost.[537] Among the most instructive features of this parable, in addition to validating the sin-debt metaphor, is that the humanity, the servant, owes this obligation is to God, the King, alone which suggests that there is no intermediary figure such as the "devil" involved in this transaction.

3.2.1.3. Salvation in the Gospel of Luke and Acts

In Luke, and its sequel Acts of the Apostles, a literary unit is presented that, according to Matera, "narrates a single story of redemptive history rooted in Israel's story and God's plan of salvation."[538] Similar to Wright, Matera contends that Luke recognizes redemption through the Messiah, Jesus, not as an impetuous response of God to human sin but a part of God's overall plan that encompasses the scope of human history. Salvation, according to Luke, comes through God's forgiveness of human sin, which in turn is a product of repentance. This theme unifies Luke's two works since Jesus' command in the Gospel, "that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in

[534] John P. Meier, *Matthew*, vol. 3, *New Testament Message: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, eds. Wilfrid Harrington and Donald Senior (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 208.

[535] Ibid., 209.

[536] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 46.

[537] Schnackenburg on this parable states, "We readily see the meaning of the story of Jesus' message: God willed to forgive completely a person who cannot personally cancel sin and debt, but expects that person to be prepared for a like forgiveness of other human beings. The petition in the "Our Father" (6:12) presumes both, and Luke 6:36 expresses it as a requirement of Jesus." Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 180.

[538] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 53.

his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (24:47), becomes the central message of the apostle's preaching in Acts. In conformity with the main themes of the Synoptic literature, the message of salvation is both accepted by some and rejected by others. Luke's portrayal in Acts of the persecution of disciples such as Stephen (Acts 7) is indicative of the continuation of this trend. "Luke-Acts," though, differentiates itself from these works since, according to Matera, it offers a comparatively more "complete presentation of the salvation the gospel brings than do the Gospels of Mark and Matthew."[539] Salvation, synonymous with the forgiveness of sin in Luke's "unified work," comes to humanity through the cross that makes recompense for sin, and reconciles them with God with whom they have been estranged.

Similar to Mark and Matthew, Luke's Christology is intelligible in light of his soteriology. Luke though offers a more comprehensive exposition of salvation since "it inscribes the story of Jesus into the story of Israel, thereby providing the New Testament with its most complete account of God's redemptive history."[540] Central to Luke's soteriology, Matera writes, is "the forgiveness of sins," which like Matthew is construed as a debt humanity is unable to pay (11:4). By the redemption of the cross, though, which pays their sin-debt, the redeemed "enter God's kingdom." The concluding chapter of Luke then "foreshadows" this "major theme of the apostle's preaching," that is, in Jesus' name, the sins of the penitent are forgiven (24:47).[541]

The cross according to Luke "was not the defeat of God but the carrying out of what he had planned."[542] The core of the gospel message, which is the primary subject of

[539] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 68.
[540] Ibid., 94.
[541] Ibid., 54.
[542] Leon Morris, *New Testament Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1986), 172.

evangelization, is summarized by Jesus when "he explains that Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms had already written of the Messiah's suffering and resurrection and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be preached in the Messiah's name to all the nations (24:44-47)."[543] This "good news" is the "plot" of Luke's narrative which is summarized by Matera,

> The Messiah of God comes to his people Israel as the Spirit-anointed Son of God with a gracious offer of salvation: the forgiveness of sins. Despite this gracious offer, Israel does not repent. Nonetheless, its rejection of the Messiah paradoxically fulfilled God's plan that the Messiah must suffer in order to enter into his glory so that repentance and forgiveness can be preached in his name to all nations.[544]

"The forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name suggests that the Mosaic law," according to Matera, "could not adequately deal with the problem of sin (13:39). Thus the church proclaims that Gentiles and Jews alike 'will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus' (15:11)."[545]

This salvation theme in Luke's Gospel continues in its sequel the Acts of the Apostles and brings continuity to the two literary units. Matera states that in the latter work, Israel is given "a second opportunity to repent and enjoy the blessings of salvation."[546] Some though reject God's gift of reconciliation through Christ, Matera notes, which gives "the nations" an opportunity to respond to this gracious offer of

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[543] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 62. Matera (Ibid., 268 [fn., 41]) further states that "John the Baptist also preached a baptism for the forgiveness of sins (3:3), but whereas John preached to Israel to prepare the way of the Messiah, the apostles will preach a forgiveness of sins in Jerusalem and beyond that has been effected by the Messiah." Stanley Porter in his essay on Luke's appropriation of the Old Testament conception of the Messiah writes, "In the Gospel, Luke draws upon a number of Old Testament passages—especially Isaiah…that resonated with current Jewish thought to depict Jesus as both the messianic prophet, and hence the eschatological prophet coming in the last times, and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy concerning the coming anointed one." Stanley E. Porter, "The Messiah in Luke and Acts: Forgiveness for the Captives," in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 145.

[544] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 51.

[545] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 430.

[546] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 52.

salvation that is preached through the disciples.[547] Central to the message of salvation that the early church preaches in Acts, Matera states, is their "[witness] to Jesus' resurrection and [proclamation of] the forgiveness of sins in his name."[548] Continuing the soteriological theme of Luke, Acts reveals that "those who repent and are baptized experience the forgiveness of their sins, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and are incorporated into a community of believers destined to be saved [2:38, 47]."[549] Other recurring themes in Acts is the "forgiveness of sins (2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18) and the "kingdom of God" (8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 28:23, 31)," both of which are central to the apostle's preaching.[550] The latter though is predicated on admittance to the former, and both are guided by the Holy Spirit (2:38) whose presence in this work differentiates Acts from the Synoptic literature. Acts catalogues the preaching of the apostles such as Peter, John, Stephen, and Paul whose message is centered on the theme of salvation that comes through Jesus Christ alone whose death and resurrection offers the forgiveness of sin and by which healing and restoration occurs (4:10). "The risen Lord is the focal point of salvation," Matera writes, since according to Luke in Acts, "for there is no other name by which people can be saved (4:12)."[551] Consonant with the other Synoptic authors, Luke offers only occasional explicit descriptions of the effects of the cross in comparison to the Pauline tradition. The explanations that are present, though, clearly indicate that the death of Christ is for the "forgiveness of sin," that is, redemption of their debt, and effects reconciliation or atonement between humanity and God.[552]

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[547] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 52.
[548] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 429-430.
[549] Ibid.
[550] Ibid., 71.
[551] Ibid., 430.
[552] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 62. Matera (Ibid.) further writes, "In dying on the cross, the Messiah has given his body and shed his blood for (*hyper*) his disciples (22:19-20). Although Luke is

3.2.2. The Pauline Tradition on the Forgiveness of Sin

The central theme of the Synoptic tradition which is "the good news of what God has done in the saving event of Christ's death and resurrection,"[553] is fully developed in the Pauline tradition, which functions, in the biblical narrative as primary definition for the term "gospel." Matera notes that the starting point of Paul's epistles shifts, accordingly, from the "kingdom of God" to "God's redemptive work in Christ."[554] Matera offers the following as a summary of the salvation story in the biblical narrative according to the Pauline tradition,

> Adam, the first human being, initiated a history of sin by his disobedience, and this resulted in death and condemnation for all. To reconcile the world to himself and rescue humanity from its sinful plight, God sent his Son, whose obedience unto death upon a cross inaugurated a new history of grace and acquittal. God had always determined that he would justify the Gentiles as well as the Jews on the basis of faith. Therefore, before sending his Son, he made a covenant with Abraham that would be fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's singular descendant. In the period between the covenant and the sending of Christ, Israel received the law, which made it aware of its transgressions. But God did not intend the law to bring justification and life. The goal of the law was Christ, and God proposed to reconcile the world unto himself through his Son, whom he sent forth as an expiation for sins.[555]

The implicit atonement theology in the Synoptic tradition is made explicit by Paul though the central message remains that same, that is, Jesus' death offers the forgiveness of sin that reconciles humanity with God. "The cross," for Paul, Matera writes,

> was the place of atonement (Rom. 3:25),where God justified, redeemed, and reconciled humanity to himself. On the cross, Christ died for all (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

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notoriously reserved about the salvific dimensions of Jesus' death, especially when compared to Paul, he hardly envisions the Messiah's death as a senseless miscarriage of justice. Rather, the death of Jesus is part of a great movement from suffering to exaltation that effects the forgiveness of sin."

[553] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 431. Matera (Ibid., 433) further writes, "Although Paul provides a more detailed and insightful analysis of salvation and the human condition than the Synoptic writers do, there is a convergence in the anthropology and soteriology of the Synoptic and Pauline traditions. Both affirm that human beings have a profound need for peace and reconciliation with God because they have sinned. God provides the means for this reconciliation in and through Christ."

[554] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 99.

[555] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 85-86.

> By means of Christ's death, God reconciled humanity to himself, allowing his Son to stand as humanity's representative before God so that humanity could stand in the righteousness of Christ before God (2 Cor. 5:19, 21).[556]

Although Paul's atonement theology is a product of his personal experience of salvation through Christ (Acts 9:3-6), it is not a subjective construct but was merely explicating what he received from existent early church soteriology. Basic to New Testament theology, then, is that the cross is construed as God's redemptive plan to save humanity, since through the death of Jesus Christ, the redeemed receive the forgiveness of their sin, namely, their debt of sin is paid, and therefore they are reconciled to God.[557]

3.2.2.1. Substitutionary Atonement in Corinthians

Paul's letters to the Corinthians, like that of other epistles such as Thessalonians, provides a model of atonement theology that is based on the idea of substitution. Paul writes that Christ "died for us" (1 Thess. 5:10), that is, "for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:4). Paul's substitutionary atonement theology, based on the notion that Christ's death paid humanity's sin-debt, is given full expression in 2

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[556] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 432. Matera (*New Testament Christology*, 101) notes, "The renewal of creation was necessary because humanity was at enmity with God. Therefore, God was reconciling the world to himself, 'not counting their trespasses against them' (2 Cor. 5:19)."

[557] Matera suggests that Paul's theology of the cross "learned from, and built upon, the Church's kerygmatic formulas that were already proclaiming the soteriological significance of Jesus' death. Paul quotes such a formula in 1 Corinthians when he writes, 'For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins (*apethanen hypertōn harmartiōn hēmōn*) in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures'(1 Cor 15:3-4)." Matera continues, "Employing and building upon formulas such as this, Paul speaks of Christ as the one who died for us (*hyper hēmōn apethanen*; Rom 5:8; 1 Thess 5:9-10); the one who gave himself for our sins (*tou dontos heauton hyper tōn hamartiōn hēmōn*) that he might rescue us from the present evil age (Gal 1:4); the one who ransomed (*exēgorasen*) us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us (Gal 3:13); the one who died for all (*heis hyper pantōn apethanen*; 2 Cor 5:14); the one whom God set forth as the place of atonement or expiation (*hilastērion*) for sin (Rom 3:25); the one who was handed over for our transgressions (*pardothē diata paraptōmata hēmōn*; Rom 4:25); the one who died for the ungodly (*hyper asebōn apethanen*; Rom 5:6); the one who loved 'me' and gave himself for 'me' (*hyper emou*; Gal 2:20). Frank J. Matera, "Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology," *Theological Studies* 67, (2006): 243.

Corinthians. Paul in this epistle writes, "one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (5:14-15). The phrase "one has died for all" (5:14) is essential, Matera explains, since it signifies the "redemptive nature of Christ's death."[558] That is, the cross redeemed, or "paid the price," using financial terminology, for the debt of sin humanity has accumulated, and of which they were unable to make satisfactory recompense.[559] The cross is then central to Pauline theology since he makes reference to the death of Christ in nearly every letter that he writes.[560] The cross is therefore the focus of Paul's evangelization since he "[preaches] Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1:23).

The forgiveness of sins for Paul, like the Synoptic writers, is made possible through the death of Christ on the cross. This is God's prophesied redemptive plan, Paul writes, since it is in "accordance with the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3). Those "in Christ" are now considered a "new creation," therefore, "the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (5:17). "All this," Paul writes, "is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (5:18).[561] Reconciliation, according

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[558] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 141.

[559] Fredriksen (*Sin: The Early History of an Idea*, 39) states that "Jesus' death and resurrection…was redemptive because he died for *sin* (1 Cor 15.3)." This commercial language suggests that "sin" has the effect of a "debt" that needs to be "redeemed." The cross, or the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is therefore to be construed as the "currency" used to make proper recompense, or "satisfy," the debt which humanity owes God because of their sin.

[560] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 464-465.

[561] Matera (*New Testament Christology*, 100) deduces a narrative from Paul, especially from 2 Cor. 5 when he offers his "major statement about sin and reconciliation." For Paul, soteriology and Christology are indistinguishable according to Schnackenburg who writes, "Paul's Christology bears the imprint of his soteriology: his central preoccupation is the salvation of man and Christ's reconciliation of the world. Redemption through the cross of Christ lies at the heart of Paul's thought—a redemption which God, in his mercy, gives all mankind, fallen into sin and death (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-2:9; Rom. 3:21-26). So much is this so that, before this truth, the words and actions of the man Jesus fade completely into the background. Paul's Christology is confined to the Son of God, who was sent to us by the Father when the times were fulfilled (Gal. 4:4; cf. Rom. 8:32). To the crucified and risen Christ, and to the Lord who is now living in heaven and who will soon come in glory (Col. 3:1-4; Phil. 3:20 ff.) for the good of mankind and of the world, to complete the work of salvation (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rom. 8:19-23)." Rudolph

to Paul, is not procured therefore through human initiative. Rather, it is God's gracious gift of the cross given to humanity that makes atonement. "The message about the cross," accordingly, Matera writes, "is the foundation for Paul's ministry of reconciliation."[562] Matera then offers the following synopsis of this "Christ Story" in 2 Corinthians,

> Because of its trespasses, humanity was at enmity with God (2 Cor. 5:19), deprived of his glory (see Rom. 3:23). To reconcile the world to himself, God put the sinless Christ in the place of sinful humanity (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ died as the representative of all, the one for the many (2 Cor. 5:14).[563]

Humanity's sin and Christ's sinlessness is clearly articulated by Paul since, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (5:21).

The 1 Cor. 5:21 text is important for illustrating Paul's notion of substitutionary atonement. Matera writes that in this passage,

> Paul employs the same preposition he does in 5:14-15, *hyper* ("for"), to emphasize that it was "for" the sake of humanity that God made Christ "sin" so that humanity might become the "righteousness of God." This striking formula does not mean that Christ became a sinner, for Paul Christ did not know sin. Rather, it points to a kind of divine interchange similar to that in Gal. 3:13, where Paul notes that Christ redeemed humanity for the curse of the law by becoming a curse…To affirm that Christ died *for* all, then, means that by his death Christ stood as humanity's representative before God, effecting reconciliation that humanity could not.[564]

In addition to reinforcing the idea of substitutionary atonement regarding soteriology, this passage also has implications for Christology. That is, if "all men have sinned" according to Paul (Rom. 3:23), and Christ is sinless, he is not mere man but a God-man.[565] These

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Schnackenburg, *New Testament Theology Today*, trans. David Askew (New York: Herder and Herder Publishing, 1963), 74-75.

[562] Ibid., 142.

[563] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 101-102.

[564] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 141. (Matera's emphasis)

[565] Regarding 2 Cor. 5:21, Matera ("Christ in Paul and John," 243) clarifies that "this difficult phrase does not mean that Christ became a sinner or was sinful; Paul insists the Christ was without sin (2 Cor 5:21). The sense here is either (1) that Christ fully entered into the human condition, which was under

major Christological and soteriological themes, such as Christ' divinity and substitutionary death which makes atonement, that are present in the Synoptic tradition are given greater expression in Paul's letters to the Corinthians which is among their unique contributions to the biblical narrative.

3.2.2.2. God's Love by the Cross in Galatians and Romans

Paul's theology of the cross is further explicated in his letters to the Galatians and Romans. His work in these epistles reinforces the biblical narrative's soteriology particularly regarding the function of the cross while making some unique contributions to this story such as,

> the preeminent role of Abraham in God's plan of salvation history, the inability of human beings to justify themselves before God by doing the works of the law, the need to believe in the promises of God that have come to their fulfillment in the appearance of Christ, the salvific value of Jesus' death, and the need for those justified on the basis of faith to live a moral life characterized by love and empowered by God's Spirit.[566]

Paul draws a sharp distinction between faith in Christ and works of the law, or the works of the Spirit and flesh respectively. This comparison, only inferred in other New Testament writings, is a central theme in these epistles. These themes are predicated upon what Christ has accomplished through his death and resurrection which is that the heart

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the power of sin and which he overcame, or (2) that Christ's death was an offering for sin." Matera (*New Testament Christology*, 182) further adds, "Paul's qualification that Christ was sinless ("did not know sin") forestalls any misunderstanding along the lines that Christ committed sin. Rather, Paul…portrays Christ as a representative figure who stands in the place of humanity. Whereas Christ, the image of God, enjoyed the righteousness of God because he stood in the correct relationship to God, errant humanity was at enmity with God because of its transgressions. To reconcile the world to himself and renew creation, God put the sinless Christ in the place of sinful humanity so that sinful humanity could stand in the place of Christ. Once more, Christ functions as a representative figure, completely associating himself with the human condition so that humanity might be reconciled to God…Because humanity was unable to reconcile itself to God, God reconciled the world to himself in Christ. Consequently, anyone who is in Christ is a new creation."

[566] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 151.

of these formative letters. This is made explicit in Paul's salutation in Galatians "Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (1:3-4). This text in conjunction with 3:13, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us," is likewise indicative of Paul's idea of substitutionary atonement that appears in 1 Cor. 5:21 studied earlier by Matera.[567] Paul further writes in Galatians, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (2:20). God's love is revealed in the form of the cross that saves humanity by faith in Christ. The fact that Jesus Christ "died for our sins" is what distinguishes the gospel Paul preaches to false gospels which are based on maintaining the law. Paul writes, "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose" (2:21). Stated succinctly, if following the law could procure salvation then the cross, according to Paul, is unnecessary. "Why, then, the law?" (3:19). This "enigmatic phrase," according to

[567] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 141. Sherri Brown in her study of Pauline soteriology particularly in reference to 1 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans regarding the cross and its relationship to Israel states that Christ's death is "God's gift of expiation, an atoning sacrifice that brings about the exaltation that fulfills all God's earlier covenantal activity and puts in place a new covenant whereby justification to any and all is made possible by the faithful obedience of Christ (Rom 3:21-26; Gal 2:26, 20; 3:22…). Just as right relationship with God was ruptured by the disobedience of the one man Adam, the new act of faithful obedience of the one man Jesus is the grace that brings justification (Rom 5:1-21; 1 Cor 15:20-28)…Through the life and ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all of God's prior covenantal activities is brought to fulfillment (1 Cor 15:3-4). Jesus is the new Adam whose faithful obedience (following the Abrahamic covenant) leads him to be the sacrifice that atones for the sin of all humankind (following the Sinai covenant), exalts him as the Christ who redeems God's people (following the Davidic covenant), and reconciles the ruptured relationship between God and humankind. Christ is indeed the climax of Israel's story. But Christ is also the turning point in God's salvation history with all humankind. As the one ultimate redeeming sacrifice, the Christ event brings about an acquittal and new relationship between God and creation in a new covenantal relationship—open to all humankind." Sherri Brown, "Faith, Christ, and Paul's Theology of Salvation History," in *Unity and Diversity in the Gospels and Paul: Essays in Honor of Frank J. Matera*, eds. Christopher W. Skinner and Kelly R. Iverson, (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 270-271.

Matera, is then answered by Paul, "It was added for [*charin*] transgressions, until the descendant came to whom the promise had been made."[568] That is, the law in God's economy of redemption functioned as Israel's "disciplinarian" or "custodian until Christ came" to demonstrate that it is not through keeping the law that one is justified, rather, "that we might be justified by faith" (3:24). The cross rendered law-keeping superfluous since, according to Paul, salvation comes through faith in Christ.

Paul's letter to the Romans is "indebted" to the theology Galatians, according to Matera, particularly in reference to his dichotomization of law and grace, and God's salvific plan beginning with Abraham and culminating in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[569] Different however is his development of the themes of sinful humanity without the cross, and Israel's role in God's salvific plan. The "human situation," in Romans, is viewed "in light of the righteousness of God" and consequently "exposes humanity's profound need for redemption."[570] After articulating the human predicament apart from the gospel, Paul then discusses God's gracious gift of salvation that has come to humanity through Christ. The human situation involves more than simply transgressing God's law but includes the problem of original sin that has affected all humanity.

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[568] This passage is taken from the New American Bible (NAB) to differentiate his interpretation from other prevailing notions. There are at least three possible ways to interpret this phrase: "(1) God added the law to provoke transgressions; (2) God added the law to make people aware of their transgressions; (3) God added the law to control transgressions." Matera favors the third interpretation construing it as a comparatively "positive" interpretation compared to the two former "negative" interpretations and fits within the context of the latter portion of this verse, Gal. 3:19b "until the descendant came to whom the promise had been made; it was promulgated by angels at the hand of a mediator." God, therefore, "provided the law as a temporary remedy for sin until Christ should appear. But when Christ appeared and dealt decisively with sin, the law's salvation-historical role ended." Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 160.

[569] The perspective of the law in Galatians is reinforced in Romans. Brown ("Faith, Christ, and Paul's Theology of Salvation History," 263) in her analysis of Paul's soteriology states that "Even though the Torah was an intermediary gift from God that is holy, just, and good (7:12), no one will be justified by the law because no one completely fulfilled its prescriptions. Therefore, God put forward Jesus as a sacrifice to establish unity between himself and humans, who are 'justified by his blood' (3:25; 5:9). The gift of Jesus, however, 'was not a mechanical offering, but the faithful death of a living human being: it was an act of obedience to God."

[570] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 197.

Humanity, because of Adam, is in a position from which they are unable to extricate themselves. Matera writes,

> It is as if sin preexisted and was waiting for the right moment to enter the world. Once unleashed, sin exercises dominion over humanity by separating humanity from God through death. Human beings may be able to repent from their individual sins and transgressions, but they cannot free themselves from the domination of sin or death. Not even the Mosaic law was able to alter this situation. Indeed, when the law finally arrived, it multiplied trespasses (5:20), not because the law was sinful (7:7) but because humanity was already under the power of sin, thanks to Adams' transgression.[571]

Paul in Romans does not equivocate concerning the human situation. He writes, "you are slaves of the one you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness" (6:16). The cross forces humanity to make a choice between reconciliation or continued alienation from God. The former offers "life" and the latter the prospect of "death."

God's "gracious gift of salvation" through the cross is the answer to the human predicament, and God does not want any person to perish. Salvation cannot be secured through works of the Law, since only the cross can make satisfactory recompense. Matera writes,

> Although the law and the prophets witness to the righteousness of God, when read in the light of Christ, it was necessary for God to deal with human sinfulness apart from the law since all sinned and fell short of the divine glory. Therefore, God freely justified humanity by his grace through the redemption (*apolytrōseōs*) that comes through Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as an atoning sacrifice (*hilastērion*). God effected this atonement through the blood of his own Son to prove his own righteousness. This was necessary since, in his great mercy, God previously overlooked humanity's transgressions (3:21-26).[572]

Important theological concepts of justification, redemption, and expiation are all present in this passage, and reveal how God, through the cross, has resolved the problem of sin.

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[571] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 177.
[572] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 116.

The cross is demonstrative of God's righteousness and love since through the death of Christ, humanity can now be considered righteous before God and saved from condemnation (Rom. 8:1). "Redemption" is among the leading metaphors Paul uses in this epistle to describe what "God has done in Christ."[573]

God's righteousness is, therefore, a central presupposition for Paul in Romans. Matera writes, "God manifested his uprightness by freely justifying humanity on the basis of Christ's death because that death was redemptive, atoned for sins, and effected the forgiveness of sins."[574] Paul's employment of commercial metaphors emerges throughout Romans, and is used to explicate that God's "remitting debts and other obligations," according to Matera, is effected through the cross. The death of Christ, unlike previous forms of paying debt for sin expressed in the Old Testament, was a form of recompense that renders all pervious currencies by comparison valueless, since by the death of Christ, "God dealt with sin once and for all."[575] Humanity, by faith in Christ, is now redeemed and reconciled. That is, they are no longer alienated from God because of

[573] Grieb, *The Story of Romans*, 38. Grieb (Ibid., 35-43) notes that in addition to "redemption" which is a commercial metaphor for describing "The Story of Jesus Christ," the term "justification" is also used which has juridical connotations and "atonement" which is evocative of Jewish sacrificial system. Paul's theology of the cross is firmly situated in Jewish atonement theology as Wright has noted. Their conception of propitiation is evident in Romans which draws upon the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur, or the "Day of Atonement." According to Leviticus 16, Arron is instructed to "kill the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood within the veil, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat" (v. 15). This is done to "make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel, and because of their transgressions, all their sins (16:16). Through the propitiation of the cross, humanity has received the "forgiveness of sins" since it is Jesus Christ, "whom God set forth as an expiation, through faith, by his blood" (3:25). Matera (*New Testament Theology*, 182) concludes that God "justified humanity by Christ's death because that death redeemed sinful humanity from sin. It presented Christ as the mercy seat of atonement, and brought about the forgiveness of sins committed in the past." This translation of Matera's is taken from the NAB. Matera notes that this interpretation is predicated upon how one translates the term "*paresin*" in Rom. 3:25. Although the NAB translates this term as "the forgiveness of sins," versions such as the NRSV translate is differently "because in his divine forbearance he had [*passed over*] the sins previously committed." (My emphasis) *Paresin* therefore can be translated either as "passed over" or "forgiveness of" sins. Matera appears to favor the NAB translation since it is more compatible within the context of Rom. 3:21-26.

[574] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 182.

[575] Ibid.

their outstanding debt. The redeemed, by faith and through the death of Christ, in contradistinction to the unredeemed who reject God's gracious offer, "are no longer under the powers of sin, death, and the law because they have been transferred to the realm of Christ, in whom they experience the power of God's Spirit at work in their lives.[576] The difference between the "saved" and "unsaved" is not merely an eschatological reality, namely, eternal life or death respectively, but an existential reality since the redeemed live in this world by the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

3.2.2.3. Redeeming Debt in Colossians and Ephesians

The central soteriological theme of redemption in Romans appears in the "Colossians hymn" (1:15-20), which "[speaks] of the Son's redemptive work," since "all things, whether on earth or in heaven, were reconciled to God through the blood on the cross."[577] The financial language in reference to the cross is given greater expression in Colossians since it is Christ, according to Paul, "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (1:14). Since "redemption" is synonymous with the "forgiveness of sins," this suggests, as Anderson has stated, that "sin has created "some-thing"[578] that requires repayment. This conception is reinforced in Col. 2:13-14, "And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against

[576] Fredriksen, (*Sin: The Early History of an Idea*, 39) notes "On account of his sacrifice, the gentile follower of Christ, once baptized, dies to sin (Rm 6.2). How so? Baptism "into his death" enables the baptized gentile to "walk in newness of life"—no longer sinful and idolatrous, thus "saved through [Christ] from the wrath of God" (Rm. 5.9). What enables his is the "spirit" of God or of Christ baptism imparts. Through Christ's saving death (which the gentile is "baptized into," Rm 6.3), sin's dominion over the believer is broken and the gentile moves from being sin's slave (when he still worshiped false gods) to being God's slave, a slave of righteousness (Rm 8.9-15)."

[577] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 220.

[578] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, ix. (my emphasis)

us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross." Matera commenting on this passage writes,

> Paul employs cosmic imagery to explain how God effected this work of redemption in Christ. Since humanity found itself in a situation of indebtedness to God because it did not carry out the legal requirements of the law, God erased the "bond" or "record" (*cheirographon*) of humanity's indebtedness, with all its "legal demands" (*dogmasin*), nailing it to the cross (2:14).[579]

The death of Christ on the cross, Colossians makes explicit, pays the debt humanity owes God because of their sin. Yet it was not only humanity that received forgiveness of sins, and was reconciled to God, but the cross has cosmological implications since the universe was likewise in need of redemption according to Colossians, "For in [Christ] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (1:19-20).

Matera offers a summary of this important epistle that contributes to the wider biblical narrative, "The Colossians, like the rest of humanity, were once enslaved to the powers of darkness and alienated from God because of transgressions. But now God has reconciled them through Christ's death upon the cross."[580] This intimation corresponds to the "Christ hymn" found in Philippians 2 when Christ, "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (vv. 7-8). Both

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[579] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 222. This view reflects Anderson's notion of sin as "debt." Anderson (*Sin: A History*, ix) writes, "It is as though a stain, weight, or bond of indebtedness is created ex nihilo when one offends against God. And that thing that sin has created will continue to haunt the offenders until it has been engaged and dealt with."

[580] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 138. Marshall (*New Testament Theology*, 376) further notes, "In Colossians we have an understanding of humanity with two aspects. On the one hand, we have the by now traditional picture of human beings as sinners (Col 2:13), alienated from God and at enmity toward him (Col 1:21); they belong to a world that is characterized by darkness (Col 1:13) from which they cannot deliver themselves. The coming of Christ is seen as a rescue operation, through which people are redeemed from their dire situation."

hymns demonstrate the importance of soteriology for properly understanding Christology. Matera writes, "On the one hand, everything was created through and for him. On the other, everything was reconciled to Christ through the blood on the cross. Since this work of creation and redemption embraces all things, whether on heaven or on earth, there should be [therefore] no doubt about the preeminence of Christ."[581]

Ephesians likewise reinforces this narrative since "God's economy of salvation," is defined as "the manner in which God arranged and determined, before the foundation of the world, how he would reconcile the world to himself and effect salvation."[582] According to Matera, Ephesians teaches that Christ "is the agent of God's economy, the one in and through whom God effects this economy of salvation."[583] Redemption is procured through the blood of Christ and those in Christ have their sins forgiven (1:7).[584] The human condition is described as being "dead through the trespasses and sins," and through the cross those in Christ are "made alive" (2:1). They were "following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience" (2:2), and considered "children of wrath," yet by God's grace, they were "made us alive together with Christ" and are now considered "saved" (2:5).

Consonant with the Bible's underlying soteriological narrative, Ephesians reveals God's design of redemption through Christ was not some capricious overreaction to Adam's sin but a predetermined plan. The Ephesians for instance, according to Matera,

[581] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 221.
[582] Ibid., 230.
[583] Ibid.
[584] Marshall (*New Testament Theology*, 394) states, "the more traditional understanding of the nature of sin and redemption…is fully present" in Ephesians, which reinforces Pauline themes like justification and reconciliation.

were elected by God to be both "the recipients of this letter" and to become God's children.[585] Matera writes,

> In accord with the mystery of his will, God determined to gather all things in Jesus Christ, his beloved Son…Before the mystery of God's will could be accomplished, however, it was necessary for Christ to redeem the elect from their trespasses by shedding his blood. Because of God's work in Christ, the elect already enjoy adoption, redemption, and the forgiveness of their trespasses.[586]

In Ephesians, similar to Colossians, redemption through the cross is central yet its unique contribution to the New Testament narrative is its exposition of the preexistence of God's plan of salvation, and further that in God's economy includes both humanity and the cosmos in redemption.

3.2.2.4. Soteriology in the Pastoral Epistles

The pastoral epistles also reveal, that "there is one God who wills salvation of all, and one mediator between God and humanity, Jesus Christ, through whom the savior God has manifested himself."[587] These letters of the Pauline tradition collectively support the central theme of the biblical narrative that "Christ came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). Further, that Christ "gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6),[588] and he gave himself 'for us that he might redeem us form all iniquity and purify

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[585] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 148.

[586] Ibid.

[587] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 241. Schnelle (*Theology of the New Testament*, 586) suggests that the "*basic soteriological orientation*" of the Pastoral Epistles is "God's eternal plan [that is] realized in Jesus Christ, whose saving epiphany conquered death and thus opens the way to eternal life. This idea already dominates the opening verses of the letters (1 Tim. 1:12-17; 2 Tim. 1:3-14; Titus 1:1-4). The frequent use of σωτήρ (Savior) as a title for God and Jesus Christ, as well as of σωτηρία (salvation) and σῴζω (save) underscores the central location of soteriology in the comprehensive theological conception in the Pastoral Epistles." (Schnelle's emphasis)

[588] Ladd (*A Theology of the New Testament*, 474) notes that since "redemption" is synonymic with "ransom" (*antilytron*). Jesus, in 1 Tim. 2:6, "gave himself" as the "price of ransom," and concludes that "Christ's death was a substitute-ransom." This passage however does not suggest that the ransom is paid to the devil, rather, that humanity's debt is redeemed, or ransomed, through the cross of Christ.

for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds' (Titus 2:14)."[589] The central message of the "gospel" in 1 Timothy is identical to that of the Synoptic writers which "promises God's gracious gift of salvation in and through Jesus Christ."[590] God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2:4). This is restated in 2 Timothy since, "God saved and called people, not according to their works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to them in Jesus Christ before time began (1:9-11)."[591]

This central affirmation of Paul is reiterated in the epistle of Titus since God, through the cross of Christ, "saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace" (3:5-7).[592] Forgiveness of sins, salvation by God's grace, a new moral life which rejects the sins of the past and the influence of the world, and the prospect of eternal life, are recurring themes in the Pastoral Epistles that reinforce the Pauline narrative which is made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The collective message of these letters, then, is that "the Savior God manifests himself in the epiphany of the Savior, Christ Jesus, who came into the world to save

[589] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 434.
[590] Ibid.
[591] Ibid.
[592] Thielman (*Theology of the New Testament*, 427) notes that for Titus, God alone is "the Savior of humanity, the only hope for living in a way that is acceptable to God (2:11-14; 3:8) and for inheriting eternal life (1:2; 3:7)." Titus 2:13-14 can be construed as a distillation of Matera's master story, since "awaiting our blessed hope," corresponds to the theme of eschatology, "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ," relates to the theme of Christology, "who gave himself for us to redeem us," describes soteriology, and "from all iniquity" that of Christian anthropology, with "to purify for himself a people" defining ecclesiology, and "of his own who are zealous for good deeds" describes Christian ethics.

sinners."[593] This soteriological focus is compatible with all the epistles that comprise the Pauline tradition, and reinforces the wider biblical narrative.[594] Yet the death of Christ also reveals God's attributes of grace, mercy, and love since, according to G. E. Ladd, in accordance with Matera's work, Paul "repeatedly affirms that it was the very love of God that accomplished the atonement wrought by Jesus' death…For him the most ignominious and cruel form of human execution has become the place where God supremely displayed his love."[595]

3.2.3. The Johannine Tradition on the Forgiveness of Sin

Similar to the salvific message of the Pauline and Synoptic traditions, the Johannine literature focuses on the work of Christ achieved through his death and resurrection. Different from these traditions, Matera notes, is its starting point which is the incarnation of the Son of God.[596] This is evident in the prologue of the Gospel of John, which describes "the Word" as "God" (1:1). John's high Christology, typified by the Son's "oneness" with the Father which is inferred throughout his Gospel and epistles,

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[593] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 159.

[594] Leon Morris in his synopsis of Pauline soteriology writes, "Paul informs the Corinthians that when he first came to their city, he had resolved 'to know nothing among [them] except Jesus Christ and him crucified' (1 Cor. 2:2). He says of himself and his colleagues, 'We preach Christ crucified' (1 Cor. 1:23). He reminds the Galatians that when he was among them 'Jesus Christ was placed before your eyes crucified' (Gal. 3:1). Such passages make it clear that for Paul the Crucifixion was central, and the whole thrust of his correspondence underlies this. Again and again he comes back to the Cross. It was the atoning death of Christ and not his exemplary life that brought salvation to sinners, and Paul never tires of emphasizing this." Morris, *New Testament Theology*, 66.

[595] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 465.

[596] Thielman (*Theology of the New Testament*, 216) states John's Christology, which informs his soteriology, is in accordance with that of the Synoptic Gospels which "affirm that Jesus' crucifixion was far from the shameful end that most people in the ancient world considered any death by crucifixion to be. Because it was the suffering of God's innocent Servant, it provided full and final atonement for sin, even the sin of those who abandoned Jesus in his hour of greatest need (Mark), of those who plotted his death (Mark, Luke-Acts), and of those who, whether Jewish or Roman, placed him on the cross (Luke-Acts), if they will only repent and believe (Acts). Though Jesus' death, God exalted him to his right hand, and from there, he will send the Spirit to empower his disciples as they complete the task of preaching the gospel (Luke-Acts; John)."

is contrasted by humanity's alienation from God which best characterizes their predicament. Yet, since God loves the world, he sends his Son to bring them salvation (3:16), so that those who believe in him share in his oneness with the Father. The "central affirmation" of John, Matera writes, is that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (1:14). John's Christology therefore is discernable in light of his soteriology. That is, though "Jesus is the Lamb of God," "the enfleshment of God's Word," and "the only Son of God, whom God sent into the world," these Christological titles are only intelligible, or pertinent, in light of his work which is to "take away the sin of the world (1:29)," to "lay down his life for his sheep (10:11, 15, 17, 18)," and "die 'for the nation' (11:51)."[597] Consistent with other New Testament traditions, soteriology and Christology are interdependent. Who Jesus is, namely, God's only begotten Son or God's Lamb cannot, accordingly, be separated from what he does, which is to take away the sin of the world.

3.2.3.1. The Lamb of God in the Gospel of John

The Gospel of John's unique contribution to the New Testament soteriological narrative is the intimate connection of the Father and the Son. "Theology is Christology," Matera contends, since the Son reveals the Father to the world. Matera writes,

> The Christological claims of the Fourth Gospel…have been so identified with its theological claims about God that it is no longer possible to speak of Jesus apart from the God who sent him, just as it is no longer possible to speak of God apart from the Son whom the Father sent into the world, Christology had become theology, and theology has become Christology.[598]

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[597] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 435.

[598] Ibid., 273-274. Reinforcing Matera's conclusion, Marshall (*New Testament Theology*, 512) suggests that "the main theme of the theology in the [Gospel of John] is undoubtedly the presentation of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God who came into the world to bear witness to the truth and to give his life so that all people might have the opportunity of receiving eternal life through faith in him."

The Christological titles in John such as "Messiah" and "Son of God" are essential to his narrative. All that is written in the Fourth Gospel is for the purpose of explicating the meaning of these names through which the reader "may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing [they] may have life in his name" (20:31). Matera suggests, "As in the rest of the New Testament, then, it is not the categories of Messiah and Son of God that determines who Jesus is but Jesus who determines what it means to be God's Son, the Messiah."[599] Theology and Christology in addition to soteriology are therefore interrelated and the awareness of this relationship is necessary for disclosing who God is and the attributes of his nature.

The primary reason for the Word becoming flesh was atone for human sin which reveals the Father's love. Compatible with Matera's work, Schnelle in his soteriological study of the New Testament writes that the "sin of the world" is both John's first statement on sin, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (1:29), and his last statement, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (20:23). These two passages, according to Schnelle, comprise a "literary and theological bracket," since, "For the world to receive the benefit of authentic life, sin must be overcome."[600] Schnelle further states,

> The point at which the sin of the world and the ζωή (life) of God converge and meet is the cross. Johannine irony is visible in the background: on the cross, the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world, while at the same time the world does away with the Lamb of God on the cross.[601]

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[599] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 282. (Reference Frank J. Matera, "Transcending Messianic Expectations: Mark and John," in *Transcending Boundaries: Contemporary Readings in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of Francis J. Moloney. Biblioteca de Scienze Religiose* 187, eds. Rekha M. Chennattu and Mary L. Coloe (Rome Liberia Ateneo Salesiano, 2005), 201-216.)

[600] Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament*, 724.

[601] Ibid.

John's Christological title "Lamb of God" whose soteriological function is "to take away the sins of the world" (1:29), is not a unique construct, but, Schnackenburg writes, a "picturesque short formula that fits into the broader early Christian view."[602] "One must imagine the meaning of Jesus' death as vicarious atonement," he further explains, "which was without doubt present in early Christianity (Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; etc.) melted together with the image of the lamb."[603]

The Good Shepherd discourse in John reinforces the idea of substitutionary atonement in the Pauline tradition in passages such as Jesus "dying for the sheep" (10:11, 15). Like Matera's work, Rudolf Schnackenburg in his study of this parable writes,

> Jesus' living sacrifice is the greatest demonstration of his care and concern for the sheep who belong to him…In the hour of danger he, in contrast to the hired hand, will risk his life for them and if necessary give it up.[604]

The high priest Caiaphas' prophetic statement, "it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish" (11:50), and Jesus' laying down of "his life for his friends" (15:13) to effect reconciliation between God and humanity also support John's substitutionary atonement theology. Jesus' words in John 6:51 are further indicative of this view, "and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." Schnackenburg on this statement by Jesus writes, "Here the idea of atonement and substitution is sounded: Jesus gives himself for [humanity] that they

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[602] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Jesus in the Gospels: A Biblical Christology*, trans. O. C. Dean (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 283.

[603] Ibid., 278. Matera (*New Testament Theology*, 286) suggests that this human malady, according to John, can be removed only by the light that the Son brings: the Son's revelation of the Father. As the one whom the Father sent into the world, Jesus the Lamb takes away the sin of the world by revealing the Father to the world, a revelation that comes to its climax in Jesus' saving death on the cross, the moment of his glorification.

[604] Schnackenburg, *Jesus in the Gospels*, 281.

may find redemption through his death."[605] Similar to passages such as Mark 14:24 and Luke 22:20 which describe Jesus' pouring out his blood "for many," John 6:51 is referential to the Eucharist which suggests that "Jesus' flesh is a means of atonement for the life of the world, which is won through Jesus' atoning death."[606]

3.2.3.2. The Cross and Expiation in the Johannine Epistles

The shorter epistles of the Johannine tradition give greater expression to the atonement theology in John's Gospel. Christ's sacrificial atonement on the cross for the sake of humanity in 1 John is reaffirmed since it is "the blood of Jesus," God's Son, that alone "cleanses us from all sin" (1:7). Jesus's death in this short letter is construed explicitly as the "*atoning sacrifice* for the sins of the whole world" (2:2).[607] The cross as a sacrifice for human sin, in 1 John, is the preeminent expression of God's love for the world since "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins" (4:10).[608] The Christology in the Gospel of John is reiterated in Johannine epistles which states that Jesus is "the Christ" (2:22), and "Son of God" (4:15; 5:5, 10, 13, 20) "who has come *in the flesh*" (4:1; 2 John 7).[609] These Christological titles, likewise, have soteriological import since through the death of

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[605] Schnackenburg, *Jesus in the Gospels*, 282. Jesus' parable in John 12:24, "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies," is cited by Schnackenburg to further support the presence of John's substitutionary atonement theology.

[606] Ibid. For a detailed defense of the sacrificial atoning death of Christ for sin in the Gospel of John see Charles A. Gieschen, "The Death of Jesus in the Gospel of John: Atonement for Sin?" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 72, (2008): 243-261.

[607] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 241. (Matera's emphasis) Matera (*New Testament Theology*, 446) highlights the correspondences between the atonement theology of 1 John and that of Paul, "1 John affirms that Jesus is an "atoning sacrifice' (*hilasmos*) for sins (2:2; 4:10), a term the recalls Paul's use of *hilastērion* ("a sacrifice of atonement') in Rom. 3:25."

[608] The tern "expiation" in 1 John 4:10 appears in the RSV and NAB yet it can is translated as "atoning sacrifice" in the New International Version (NIV) and NRSV, and propitiation in the KJV and NAS which suggests that the terms are not mutually exclusive but can be used interchangeably.

[609] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 259. (Matera's emphasis)

God's Son, in 1 John, "sins are forgiven" (2:12) which is identical to the work of the "Lamb" in the John's Gospel (1:29).[610] The idea of sacrificial substitutionary atonement, that is, Christ's blood shed on the cross, for the sins of humanity, to bring reconciliation between God and the world, is basic to these epistles, and compatible with the Gospel of John and the Synoptic and Pauline traditions that comprise the canonical narrative.

3.2.4. Other Voices on the Forgiveness of Sin

3.2.4.1. Sacrificial Atonement in Hebrews

The sacrificial system in connection to the cross in the Johannine tradition is fully developed in the book of Hebrews. This work offers a unique contribution to the canonical narrative, particularly regarding the topic of soteriology, or the forgiveness of sins, by its explicit retrieval of the Old Testament sacrificial system, and the office of Christ's priesthood. Matera writes,

> This writing, which the author identifies as "my word of exhortation' (13:22), presents a profound reflection on the meaning and significance of Jesus' death in terms of the Day of Atonement, arguing that Jesus was a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek whose death inaugurated a new covenant that effected the forgiveness of sins once and for all times.[611]

Although the contribution of Hebrews is unique, its atonement theology nonetheless "stands within the mainstream of New Testament theology," Matera contends and, further, "Like the vast majority of New Testament writings, it identifies Jesus as the Son

[610] The Johannine tradition's Christological title "Lamb of God," according to Schnackenburg (*Jesus in the Gospels*, 278-279) is a probable a reference to Old Testament passages such as Isaiah 53, "like a lamb, is led to slaughter and whose life is an offering for sin (Isa. 53:7, 10-12)." This name is also referential to the "sacrificial lamb of the Jewish cult (Exod. 29:38-42)," and "the lamb in the account of the binding of Isaac in Genesis 22." Further, "The Lamb of God," in the Gospel of John, "nullifies the guilt of sin of the whole world (cf. 1 John 2:2).

[611] Matera (*New Testament Theology*, 333) states, "The unknown author of Hebrews is one of the great theologians of the New Testament. Equal in theological stature to Paul and John."

of God and acknowledges the centrality of his death in God's redemptive plan."[612] Similar to the Synoptic, Pauline, and Johannine traditions, Hebrews is based on the presupposition that humanity is alienated from God because of sin, and they are in profound need of forgiveness. Salvation is then made possible through the death of Christ who redeemed them from this dire predicament (1:3). Different however is Hebrews' sacrificial atonement that is grounded in First Temple theology which reinforces the underlying soteriological narrative that connects the old and new covenants.

Hebrews underscores covenantal theology relative to the cross since "under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (9:22). Christ, then, "has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (9:26). This statement reveals that the primary purpose of Jesus' first coming was to expiate, that is, to forgive sin through his volitional death on the cross. "This redemptive work—the forgiveness of sins—was the crucial moment," Matera suggests, "in God's plan of salvation."[613] Although Jesus is described as the "high priest" his vocation is considerably different than his predecessors since, he is "not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (4:15). The Son of God's assuming human flesh, though, "abases" his divinity since "he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest

[612] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 335.

[613] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 186. Matera (Ibid.) further states that "Hebrews, like other [New Testament] writings presupposes an underlying narrative or the story of Christ" that is outlined in Heb. 1:1-4, "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. [3] He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs."

in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people."[614] Matera writes, "As a high priest, he entered into the heavenly sanctuary by his death in order to deal with sin once and for all"[615] "Jesus' 'ordination' to the priesthood," Matera states, "is a culmination of a lifetime of obedience, which finds its climax in the cross."[616] Matera further explains,

> having identified Jesus as a high priest, the author explains the nature and significance of Jesus' sacrifice. To accomplish this, he employs the promise of a new covenant and the rite of the Day of Atonement to argue that Jesus' death was a high priestly act whereby he entered the true holy of holies, the heavenly sanctuary, thereby effecting forgiveness of sins, once and for all, and so inaugurating the new covenant.[617]

Hebrews, Matera concludes, "views the human predicament as a 'consciousness of sin' (10:2) from which only the Son of God could free humanity by the sacrifice of his own blood."[618] This attestation that God forgave human sin through Jesus' "atoning death on the cross" in Hebrews is affirming what was basic to early church atonement theology, and, accordingly to all of the diverse writers that contribute to the New Testament.[619]

3.2.4.2. The Catholic Epistles on Redemption

The letter of James is a considerable contrast in both genre and content to Hebrews, and likewise distinct from the other New Testament tradition since the theme of

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[614] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 342.

[615] Ibid., 436. Marshall (*New Testament Theology*, 609-610) states "The sacrifice of Christ achieves its end perfectly and once for all, and thus inaugurates a new covenant under which people can be truly cleansed from sin."

[616] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 343.

[617] Ibid., 346. Matera (Ibid.) further notes, "This comparison between Jesus' shameful death on the cross and the entrance of the high priest into the Holy of Hollies on the Day of Atonement is one of the boldest statements in the New Testament. On face value, Jesus' crucifixion was the execution of a criminal. But the author makes it the completion and perfection of Israel's cult, arguing that the alleged criminal was a high priest, and that his death was the perfect sacrifice for sins. The author sees the presence of the divine in the secular."

[618] Ibid., 436.

[619] Ibid., 338.

redemption, or the cross of Christ which rescues humanity from their predicament, is comparatively modest.[620] Further, mutual themes such as resurrection and even the term "gospel" are absent from this text. Nonetheless, Matera notes, the problem of sin, as a violation of the law and Christ's acting according to the law, and the need of forgiveness is a central theme in this letter. James, then, is not "unaware of Christ's saving death and resurrection," rather, his "use of the 'Lord' in conjunction with the name Jesus Christ (1:1; 2:1), or as a way to refer to the exalted Christ (5:7-8, 14-15), implies the event of Christ's death and resurrection, and indicates that James confesses Jesus as the one whom God has exalted at his right hand."[621] Redemption from sin and reconciliation to God through the cross consequently is presupposed in James, and foundational for the letter's ethical exhortations.[622]

Similar to other New Testament writers, 1 Peter's soteriological premise is located in the letter's salutation, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles…chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you" (1:1-2).[623]

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[620] Marshall (*New Testament Theology*, 633) states that James, nonetheless, "is explicitly concerned with the crucial questions of how people are saved (Jas 1:21; 2:14; 4:12) and justified (Jas 2:21-25). What is happening is that to a considerable extent James emphasizes elements in New Testament theology and ethics that tended to be ignored or marginalized elsewhere, and he has an important corrective to offer some mistaken practical consequences that were being drawn from mainline Pauline theology."

[621] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 338.

[622] Passages in James such as, "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures" (1:18), and the "implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (1:21) are to be construed as expressions that "refer to the gospel and point to the redemptive significance of its message" (Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 368). Matera (Ibid.) further writes, "On the one hand, the gospel [according to James] is a salvific message that brings about the new birth so that those who embrace it are the firstfruits of God's creatures. On the other hand, this word is an implanted word, a gift from above, and it touches the deepest self of those who embrace it. James' objective is to illustrate how followers of Jesus are to live the Christian life that is in accordance with Old Testament precepts. This is imperative since believers in Christ are now the "people of God," who have been exiled from a life of sin, and called to be a light to the nations."

[623] Matera (*New Testament Christology*, 177) notes that 1 Peter's reference to the "blood of Christ" is similar to that of other New Testament writings such as Paul who, "reminds the Corinthians that they have been redeemed as a price (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23). Other texts speak of the redemptive power of

Like James, the fact that Christ dies for the forgiveness of sins is presupposed in 1 Peter. This view supports the remaining subject matter of the letter that is summarized by Matera,

> At one time, the recipients of this letter were not the people of God, nor could they expect mercy from God, for they were burdened by their sins. But now, they are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's people. Christ suffered for their sins, bearing them in his body, on the cross, and redeemed them from their former way of life by his precious blood. [624]

Similar to Hebrews, 1 Peter "is conscious of the redemptive value of Christ's blood. Believers have been 'sprinkled' with the blood of Christ (1:2). They were 'ransomed' from the futile ways they inherited from their ancestors by 'the precious blood of Christ,' which 1 Peter compares to a lamb 'without defect or blemish' (1:18-19)."[625] "The image of the lamb,"[626] in Peter that also appears in John, Matera writes, is evocative of the Passover lamb whose blood protected Israel at the time of its deliverance from Egypt in Exodus 12.

According to 1 Peter, God destined Christ for this redemptive work 'before the foundation of the world,' but it is only now, 'at the end of the ages,' that Christ has been revealed for their sake" (1:20).[627] The letter's substitutionary atonement theology is

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Christ's blood (Acts 20:28; Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:12-14). And John 1:29 describes Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

[624] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 175. Matera (Ibid., 176) cites, 1 Peter 1:10-11, "The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory" to demonstrate the writers rational for the death of Christ, grounding it in Old Testament prophetic literature. Yet not just their writings but the persecution they experienced, just as the church is experiencing.

[625] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 436. Matera (*New Testament Christology*, 177) suggests that 1 Peter is referencing Numbers 28-29 "without defect" or "unblemished" "to describe what kind of lamb was appropriate for temple sacrifice."

[626] Ibid., 376.

[627] Ibid., 436. Matera (*New Testament Christology*, 175) writes, "Christ was known before the foundation of the world…He was manifested (*phanerōthentos*) by God, because it was necessary to redeem people from their futile way of life [burdened by sin 2:24; 3:18] their ancestors handed on to them…he shed his blood and dies as a lamb without defect or blemish (*ammou amōmou kai apilou*)." Schnelle (*New*

unequivocal since Jesus Christ "bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness," and, further, "By his wounds you have been healed." (2:24).[628] The theology of the cross in 1 Peter's is further supported by statements such as, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit" (3:18).[629] The soteriology of this short letter is summarized by Matera,

> Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, believers have been given 'a new birth' in virtue of Christ's resurrection from the dead (1:3). His new birth makes them the beneficiaries of an inheritance in heaven, which the author describes as 'imperishable, undefiled, and unfading' (1:4). Their salvation, then, has already been secured for them, and it will be revealed in the last time.[630]

The centrality of soteriology appears in 2 Peter, according to Matera, since it "expresses the salvation believers have received and the situation from which they have been rescued when it affirms that they have escaped 'from the corruption that is in the

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Testament Theology, 609), on the subject of God's predetermined plan of salvation, states "The whole of 1 Peter's soteriology can be covered in two words: δί ὑμᾶς (for your sake). The revolutionary turn from the old age to the new occurs in redemption through the blood of the lamb; God had already determined this course before time began, and for the sake of believers (1:20, 'He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages *for your sake*'). (Schnelle's emphasis)

[628] Matera, *New Testament Christology*, 179. The idea of substitutionary atonement is clearly expressed in 1 Peter. Schnelle (*New Testament Theology*, 608) notes, "Jesus's *representative suffering for others*, his death and resurrection, constitute the basis of 1 Peter's soteriology (1 Pet. 2:21, 'Christ also suffered for you"; 3:18a, 'Christ also suffered for [the forgiveness of] sins once for all')." (Schnelle's emphasis)

[629] Matera (*New Testament Christology*, 179) expands further that "Peter asserts that Christ suffered 'for you.' The preposition he employs—hyper ('for')—occurs frequently in the New Testament in conjunction with Jesus' death, and in this case with his suffering. In most instances a person or group of persons stands as the object of the preposition ('for me,' 'for us,' 'for all,' 'for the wicked'), thereby highlighting the vicarious nature of Christ's death or suffering. His suffering or death accomplishes something other could not do by their suffering or death. He 'bore our sins in his body on the cross,' freeing people from their sins and enabling them to live a new way of life characterized by righteousness. Christ's sufferings, then, play a decisive role in healing humanity's sinful condition (2:24)."

[630] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 376. Matera (Ibid., 382) notes that "The most important Christological contribution of 1 Peter is found in three hymnlike passages (1:18-21; 2:22-25; 3:18-22) that highlight Christ's suffering and redemptive death. Drawing upon the motif of the Suffering Servant found in Isaiah 53, the first focuses on the redemptive death of Christ. The second, which also makes use of the Suffering Servant motif, presents Christ as a model of innocent suffering, by whose wounds sinners have been healed. The third begins with the suffering of Christ and describes his victorious ascent into heaven, where he is presently enthroned over the cosmic powers. The result is a presentation of Christ that has his preexistence and postexistence in view but finds its center gravity in Christ's sufferings."

world' and become 'participants of the divine nature' [1:4]." The church in this letter is admonished to avoid being "blind and shortsighted" and not to forget that they were "cleansed from" their "old sins" (1:9). The dichotomy between the saved and unsaved that appears in the Synoptic tradition, also surfaces in 2 Peter when on "the day of the Lord" (3:10) the former group, who have their sins forgiven dwell in "righteousness" (3:13), while the latter that remains in sin will experience "destruction" (3:16).

3.2.4.3. The Lamb Who Conquers in Revelation

This dichotomization between the two types of people is given full expression in the book of Revelation. This last book of the New Testament story continues the theme that began in Mark which details the destiny of those whose sins are forgiven by the shed blood of the Lamb, and "are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (19:9), and the recalcitrant who have rejected God's gracious gift of salvation through the cross and are "thrown into the lake of fire" (20:15). Central to Revelation, then, is the redemptive death of Jesus who is revealed as the "Lamb who was slain" (5:12). Jesus' title as God's "Lamb" in Revelation is evocative of the Gospel of John (1:29), and likewise suggests that "Lamb that has been slain" (5:6) was the sacrificial Passover lamb (John 19:36). The Christological title "Lamb" in both works has specific soteriological implications since he was sent by God to take away the sins of the world. The function of the Lamb however is comparatively more developed in Revelation.[631] For instance, the Lamb of God is described as being worshipped (5:8), opening the seals of judgment (6:1), exacting wrath on the impenitent (6:16), and leading those who have been redeemed (14:4). "By

[631] Compared the Gospel of John (1:29, 36), this Christological title in Revelation is far more pervasive, (5:6, 8, 12, 13; 6:1, 16; 7:9, 10, 14, 17; 8:1; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1, 4, 10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7, 9; 21:9, 14, 22, 23; 22:1, 3).

the victory of his death," Matera writes, "the slaughtered lamb has won a new people for God."[632] The entire book therefore concerns "God's final victory over evil," Matera contends, made possible through Christ's death and resurrection. Therefore "Christ's victory on the cross is God's victory, and God's victory is Christ's victory."[633]

Consistent with the epistle of Hebrews, it is the blood of Jesus Christ that offers humanity the forgiveness of sins which effects atonement, or reconciliation, between God and the sinful world. John the Seer writes that Christ is "the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth…who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood" (1:5). Further, Matera notes, "By his blood, the Lamb has ransomed for God saints from every tribe language and people and nation (5:9), making them a 'kingdom, priests serving his God the Father (1:6)."[634] Only the Lamb that has been slain (5:12) can offer the forgiveness of sins, and, accordingly, effect righteousness since the redeemed "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14).[635] Consequently, for John, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!" (7:10), and there is only one way to be redeemed which is through Christ, the Lamb of God. Compatible with New Testament soteriology, particularly as it is expressed in the Johannine and Pauline traditions and Hebrews, sacrificial substitutionary atonement identifies best Revelation's exposition of the cross. That is, the blood of the Lamb is shed for the forgiveness of sin which reconciles humanity to God. The book of Revelation also expresses the eschatological view of all New Testament writers, namely,

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[632] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 436.

[633] Ibid., 415.

[634] Ibid., 436.

[635] Schnelle (*New Testament Theology*, 760) writes, "At the soteriological center of Revelation stands the image of the *redeeming power of the blood of the Lamb*…Blood represents the concrete, once-for-all giving of Jesus's life on the cross; his life was the purchase price for salvation form the power of sin and the realm of the anti-God powers." (Schnelle's emphasis)

that God's kingdom "will come in power. The dead will be raised incorruptible. God's enemies will be defeated in a final and definitive manner."[636]

3.2.5. Summary

Having the "experience of salvation God has effected in Christ,"[637] all New Testament authors were concerned to convey this to their readers so that they experience the redemption from sin, and atonement with God.[638] "God's relationship to humanity, and humanity's new relationship to God in Christ," then, was their essential focus.[639] This concern is what gives cohesion to the New Testament narrative. Matera explains,

> Although this experience of salvation can and does differ from person to person, and so from writing to writing, there is an overall consensus in the writings of the New Testament that God has rescued believers from the power of sin and death that threaten their relationship with God. The early Christians believed that their sins had been forgiven in a new and definitive way through God's work in Christ, and because God had forgiven their sins in and through Christ, they now stood in a new relationship to the Creator. The kingdom had dawned, the resurrection of the dead had begun in Christ, and they were justified, reconciled, redeemed, and sanctified.[640]

In studying the diverse "traditions" and "Other Voices" on the topic of the forgiveness of sin, similar to the analysis of Christian anthropology in the previous chapter, though this literature is not always complimentary, Matera notes, it is not contradictory. What is

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[636] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 468.

[637] Ibid., xxviii.

[638] Marshall (*New Testament Theology*, 719-720) notes that "*The center of mission*," for all New Testament writers, is "*The saving event*," that is, the cross. (Marshall's emphasis) Further, "The basic idea of a death on behalf of other people is found throughout the New Testament. The fact that the death delivers people from sins and their consequences and reconciles them to God is again common to all. Different sets of images encapsulate different facets of the saving act. Common to them all is that Christ died for or on behalf of human beings and that his death deals with the sin(s) that separate them from God, enslave them in evildoing and place them under divine judgment that is active now and in a final rejection of those who reject the gospel. His death is understood in categories taken from the Old Testament understanding of sacrifice to remove the barrier caused by sin between humanity and God."

[639] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, xxviii-xxix.

[640] Ibid., 479.

constant is the fact that Jesus Christ alone "is the savior because in and through him God provides the definitive remedy for the plight that affects the human condition."[641]

The New Testament authors' disclosure of God's redemptive plan comes from their personal experience of God's salvation, Matera notes, and this perspective is essential for properly understanding their writings. This is one of the important aspects that has emerged from this study on the topic of the forgiveness of sin together with, according to Wright, the understanding that since early church was "essentially Jewish in form," theologians must think "Jewishly" if they are to accurately interpret early church soteriology.[642] Since the notion of sin is understood as "exile" during the Second Temple period, the "return from exile" means that sin has been forgiven.[643] The idea of punishment for sin as a method of raising currency is then reinforced in this view. Similarly that recompense is made to God to whom Israel was alienated, and further that it is this same God who leads the nation out of exile which brings "atonement" to their relationship. New Testament soteriology is compatible with these themes because it is God in the Messiah, Jesus, whose death offers humanity the forgiveness of sin. The early church's high Christology along with their use of terminology such as redemption, substitution, and sacrifice in explicating their theology of the cross are justified and consonant with God's plan of redemption regarding Israel. The early church's story of salvation then offers continuity between the Old and New Testaments and exposes a larger narrative. Finally, that the mechanism of salvation, namely the death of Christ, reveals God's justice and love offering humanity life instead of death and freedom from

[641] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 437.
[642] Wright, *People of God*, 427.
[643] Ibid., 72.

oppression which all correspond with Israel's story. Considering these themes are then essential for measuring the compatibility of an atonement theology with Scripture.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANSELMIAN ATONEMENT THEOLOGY IN LIGHT OF SIN AND FORGIVENESS IN BIBLICAL NARRATIVE THEOLOGY

This study of atonement in New Testament theology in light of the scholarship of Wright and Matera has revealed several recurring themes. First, God's plan of salvation is enacted in the advent of Israel's Messiah, Jesus. This was not an impetuous response of God to human sin but his coming was predicted by the Old Testament prophets and recorded in the writings of the early church. Second, God's forgiveness of sin was effected, specifically, through the death of the Messiah. First century Christianity viewed the cross in light of biblical and Second Temple sources to demonstrate that Jesus's death was both sacrificial and substitutionary because the cross makes satisfactory recompense for sin on humanity's behalf.[644] Third, the forgiveness of sin through the death of Christ brings reconciliation between God and humanity, and offers salvation to the world, that is, life instead of death, liberation from the forces of evil to which they have subjugated, and fellowship in God's kingdom.

These primary soteriological themes from the third chapter of this project when combined with the primary anthropological themes in the second chapter, namely, the ubiquity of sin and its construal as an insurmountable debt, which has alienated humanity from God, offer a framework for the salvation story that underlies the biblical narrative.[645] The major themes that have emerged from this study will be used in the present chapter to demonstrate the compatibility of Anselm's satisfaction theory with the

[644] For an extended study of the language of sacrifice and substitution, reference Walter Unger, "Substitution: The Sure Foundation of Atonement," *Direction* 41, no. 1 (2012): 4-17.

[645] The above "framework" offers a specific, and more detailed, thematic substructure to the first major structural theme of "soteriology" in Matera's master story.

soteriology of the biblical narrative. This chapter will then conclude by highlighting the various contributions the objective type can make to contemporary discourse on atonement theology.

4.1. The Objective Type in Light of Biblical Narrative Theology

Historically, the subjective and dramatic types were proposed, largely, as an alternative to the "developed doctrine" of Anselm's objective type that was later reinforced by Calvin which they believed, deviated from the early church and patristic soteriology. Abelard and Aulén believed that satisfaction and penal substitution theories focus too narrowly on the death of Jesus the neglect of his ministry and resurrection, while contemporary theologians such as Weaver argue that objective theory mistakenly portrays God as violent and vindictive whose love is subordinate to his justice. Current advocates of objective theory such as Thomas Schreiner though argue that objective atonement theology is comparatively more consistent with Scripture when "considered as a canonical whole."[646] The language of expiation, propitiation, and substitution that are instrumental to this view makes use of conceptions such as the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, referenced by the writer of Hebrews, which is largely ignored in the proposals of subsequent atonement theologies.[647] Objective theorists contend that this literature is imperative for understanding biblical soteriology. There is, then, a continuous narrative concerning atonement beginning in First Temple period that progresses through the Second Temple era that informs New Testament thought concerning the cross as

[646] Schreiner, *Penal Substitution View*, 67. (For an expanded analysis satisfaction theory's compatibility with Scripture Schreiner references the work of John Stott [*The Cross of Christ*, 133-63].)

[647] For an extended study on the relationship between the terms "expiation" and "propitiation," reference, James M. Boice, "The Nature of the Atonement: Propitiation," in *Atonement*, ed. Gabriel N. E. Fluhrer (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010), 31-48.

God's instrument for forgiving human sin which offers them reconciliation and a restored relationship with their Creator. This atonement type then takes the human predicament of sin seriously and underscores the absolute need of Christ's death on the cross to effect salvation. God's attributes of righteousness, justice, mercy, and love are conscientiously held in proper tension in theology of the cross which demonstrates that "God's holiness is vindicated in the cross, while at the same time his love is displayed in the willing and glad sacrifice of his Son."[648]

4.1.1. Satisfaction Theory in Light of Biblical Narrative Theology

4.1.1.1. Biblical Narrative Anthropology and Satisfaction Theory

Similar to the subjective and dramatic types, the ubiquity of sin, which is the foundational theme of soteriology in the biblical narrative, is likewise an essential presupposition in Anselm's theory. Like Aulén, this places humanity is a position from which they are unable to extricate themselves which accords with the hamartiology of the canonical narrative. Different from these conceptions, though, is the specific consequence of sin which grounds satisfaction theory. Anselm's definition of sin as "not rendering to God what one ought," and what "ought" to be rendered is humanity's "obedience to the will of God" is foundational to his theory.[649] Humanity's disobedience, determined by the canon of God's commandments, creates an obligation, or "debt" to God which is accruing since they have abrogated their primary responsibility as God's creatures.[650] The sin-debt of humanity dishonors God by disordering God's perfect universe, and they remain in a state of guilt, or obligation, until the debt has been satisfied through

[648] Schreiner, *Penal Substitution View*, 93.
[649] Evans, *Anselm*, 76.
[650] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.11.

satisfactory recompense.[651] The failure to make comparable restitution typifies what Anselm considers "injustice," and there can be no greater crime committed than for God's creatures to take away his honor by not repaying this debt. Anselm's view of sin as an ontological category is the fundamental distinction between his anthropology and those of his detractors, and is primarily responsible for setting his atonement theology, along with his critics, on different trajectories.

Satisfaction theory then conceives of sin as a subjective reality with objective consequences. Sin is construed by Anselm as a "subjective" category because of humanity's inherited disposition, that is, original sin, together with their subsequent volitional acts of disobedience. The "objective" consequences are sin's concrete effects, namely, that it creates a "thing," which Anselm refers to as a "debt" that physically alters the universe. As an ontological reality, sin requires a corresponding physical solution, meaning, that it must be "paid" in tangible "currency" which is consonant with Second Temple soteriology.

This model therefore distinguishes itself from Aulén's Christus Victor motif that conceives of sin in objective terms alone, that is, an extrinsic force, or "objective power standing behind men."[652] Dramatic theorists, accordingly, conceive of sin as an objective category with subjective consequences which is an inversion of Anselm's position. Sin, for Aulén and Weaver, is grouped with death and the devil that comprise the "evil forces" which are external to humanity and hold them in captivity. Redemption in this motif then necessarily involves a third party, apart from humanity and God, which requires a payment for their liberation. In satisfaction theory, conversely, because sin is a subjective

[651] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.11.
[652] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 147.

category with objective effects, humanity is held accountable directly to God for their disobedience which is compatible with biblical anthropology demonstrated in Isaiah 40 and the parables of Jesus in Matthew concerning the servant's debt, namely, humanity's, owed to the king, that is, God.

Anselm's hamartiology is also markedly different from Abelard's since the latter conceives of sin as a subjective reality with subjective consequences. Like Anselm, Abelard agrees that humanity is responsible for their sin and their subsequent captivity to Satan's power. Yet the consequence of sin in subjective theory is not humanity's alienation from God but social discord. This view then does not adequately consider the seemingly irreparable damage that sin has caused not only socially, but theologically, that is their relationship with God, and cosmologically since it disorders the universe. Anselm's view has been criticized for his apparent neglect of the "subjective" consequences of the atonement.[653] Yet Anselm's objective type is in accordance with the narrative structure of Matera's master story since it prioritizes soteriology over ethics, or right conduct in social relationships, which distinguishes the cause from the effect.

Anselm's theory which is predicated upon a strong conception of the "seriousness of sin"[654] further differentiates his view from the objective and dramatic types. Even the "slightest sin" such as "a single glance of the eye against the will of God" is counted as sin in Anselm's model, and this ostensive harmless movement disturbs the perfect order of God's Creation in a way that nothing within the system can correct."[655] Since all

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[653] Hannah (*Anselm on the Doctrine of Atonement*, 340) highlights this as one of the basic objections of Anselm's detractors.

[654] Evans, *Anselm*, 69.

[655] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape*, 218. John Stott (*The Cross of Christ*, 119), concerning Anselm's hamartiology, which informs his conception of the cross, writes, "The greatest merits of Anselm's exposition are that he perceived clearly the extreme gravity of sin (a willful rebellion against God in which the creature affronts the majesty of his Creator), the unchanging holiness of God (as unable

humanity is guilty in this regard, and further that they are held culpable for inherited sin, the human situation is portrayed as particularly dire. Humanity on its own, Anselm avers, is unable to make restitution since either "penitence, a contrite and humbled heart, fasting and many kinds of bodily labour, the showing of pity through giving and forgiveness, and obedience" is "rendering to God something which [they already] owe him."[656] Further, God cannot simply eliminate sin through a cosmological conquest of evil since, according to Anselm, the damage that sin has done to the universe would be "unregulated." Moreover, "if a sin is forgiven without punishment: the position of the sinner and non-sinner before God will be similar—and this does not befit God."[657] Among the major distinctions between these atonement types then are their divergent conceptions of sin and its effects. For Anselm, "Human sins have consequences. When individuals disobey moral law, a tangible form of evil is created in the world that must be accounted for."[658] This view of sin, like all other models, significantly influences Anselm's theology of the cross, and how it fits into God's salvific plan.

4.1.1.2. Biblical Narrative Soteriology and Satisfaction Theory

Since the debt that sin has accumulated is beyond humanity's capability to repay, Anselm deduces that recompense must come from an entity outside human agency. God, recognizing the human predicament and desiring reconciliation, therefore condescends to earth in the person of Jesus Christ, who alone has the capacity to make satisfactory

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to condone any violation of his honour), and the unique perfections of Christ (as the God-man who voluntarily gave himself up to death for us)."

[656] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.20.

[657] Ibid., I.12.

[658] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 54. Anderson (Ibid. 202) further notes Anselm's conception of sin is compatible with the rabbinic hamartiology "sin is a debt and the idea that God is the holder of the bond."

recompense. Christ who is man, yet without sin, pays the debt humanity cannot by his punishment and death. The cross for Anselm offers the only logical solution to this problem since the sacrifice of Christ "is of greater weight than all of the sins of the world put together."[659] Further, Christ's obedience merits the credit that is necessary to satisfy humanity's obligation "since he is in need of nothing…he can transfer his reward to humanity's advantage so that it can be relieved of its unpayable debt to justice."[660]

At the cross God's attributes of love and justice intersect. God's love is revealed through his ardent desire to be reunited with his creation that has been alienated because of sin and is willing to do this at the expense of his own life. Justice is served since God does not simply overlook sin but deals with it in the "hard currency"[661] of his punishment and death. This model offers a comparatively better solution to some of the perplexities a viable proposal of atonement presents since God's principal characteristics remain uncompromised, and humanity is held accountable for their sin. The concepts of sacrifice and substitution that are contributing factors to biblical soteriology are likewise maintained in this proposal. Also, satisfaction theory displays an element of moral influence that was a concern to contrary to Abelard, since, according to Hunter Brown,

> Jesus' act is not just submission to vicarious punishment but a superlative example of the truly human response God envisioned when he created humanity. It is a quintessential self-giving which is the apex of the created human capacity and the utter antithesis of the self-serving human rejection of divine authority.[662]

The obedience of the Son of God is not only essential for recapitulating the model of Adam prior to the "fall," but reveals that the cross was not coerced but indicative of God's loving self-gift to humanity to redeem them from their dire situation.

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[659] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape*, 218.
[660] Brown, "*Anselm's* Cur Deus Homo *Revisited*," 198.
[661] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 8.
[662] Brown, "*Anselm's* Cur Deus Homo *Revisited*," 198.

Anselm's satisfaction model further distinguishes itself from the subjective and dramatic types by the importance it places on the person of Christ, namely that he is "perfect God" and "perfect man"[663] which accords with biblical soteriology and Chalcedon Christology. His treatise, which discloses his atonement theology, centers on the Christological question, *Cur Deus Homo*. What emerges from his work is that soteriology reveals Christology, which accords with Matera's narrative structure. That is, what Jesus does is affiliated with who he is. This is in contrast to Abelard who prioritizes soteriology over Christology and, accordingly, Christ's divinity is less essential than his humanity. This also differentiates Anselm's view from Aulén's whose soteriology and Christology are largely indistinguishable, and results in his emphasis of Christ's divinity over his humanity based on his interpretation of 2 Cor. 5:19, "God was reconciling the world to himself." For Anselm there is a logical necessity that Jesus Christ is equally divine and human since only God is void of original sin, and therefore "has the goodness and justice which could be offered to right his offended goodness and justice."[664] Yet, he must also be human since "the obligation rests with man, and no one else, to make the payment referred to. Otherwise mankind is not making recompense."[665] The God-man for Anselm solves the apparent quandary of the human predicament disclosed in the biblical narrative since Jesus Christ can offer the satisfactory recompense on humanity's behalf. George Sumner writes, "At the very heart of Anselm's theology is that claim this satisfaction represents an exchange, Jesus in our place, Jesus for us—that is after all why Anselm explains why it had to be a God-man."[666]

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[663] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, II.7.
[664] Sumner, "Why Anselm Still Matters," 30.
[665] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, II.6.
[666] Sumner, "Why Anselm Still Matters," 33.

The importance of Christology to satisfaction theory is matched only by the essential role of the cross, which is, by comparison of greater importance to Anselm's objective view than the subjective and dramatic types which prioritize to the life and resurrection of Christ respectively. The importance of Christ's death for Anselm is a twofold product of the seriousness with which he views sin and the consequences of sin's effects. For Anselm, fundamentally, sin has created a debt which has separated humanity from God which results in the penalty of "death." The cross is the only way that this debt can be satisfied and humanity then reconciled to God. Contrary to many of his critics, Anselm's satisfaction theory is not strictly a construct of his medieval context.[667] Rather, his view reflects Second Temple soteriology, according to Anderson, that later emerges in the work of New Testament literature such as Romans which states, "For the wages of sin is death" (6:23). The principles of satisfaction theory are also consistent with the "train of thought" of patristic thinkers such as Tertullian and Cyprian who, building upon the "later books of the Hebrew Bible,"[668] Anderson contends, "set forth the concept of making 'satisfaction' for one's sins."[669] This view of the cross continued through the

[667] Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker (Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker. *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000], 131.) write that it is Anselm's "rooting his explanation of the atonement in the culture of the day, that Anselm stumbles and offers us a model of what to avoid. He does more than just use images and experiences from daily life to illustrate the atonement; he allows his experience of medieval life—its logic and conventional wisdom—to have an overwhelming influence in the shaping of his model of the atonement."

[668] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 44.

[669] Ibid., 190. Anderson further notes that patristic theologians supported the biblical metaphor for sin as debt, but came to the conclusion that the devil, not God, was the bondholder. Anderson (Ibid., 194) writes, "many of the earliest Christian thinkers conceded that God had conceded to Satan the right to hold the bond of indebtedness that had been signed in the Garden of Eden. Because God had threatened Adam and Eve with death should they fail to keep his command, all their posterity was through to fall under a bond held by Satan. The debt was collected in the form of death. Modern theologians assert that the story of Christ's defeat of the devil and the voiding of this bond is a piece of mythology having nothing to do with biblical narrative." One of the "modern theologians" to which Anderson is referring is Robert Jenson who, states that "The tale of Christ's victory over anti-godly powers does not so much place the Crucifixion within the biblical narrative as construct a new and independent narrative from bits of biblical and patristic language. The language appropriated is in large part mythological, use interpretively in the Bible and by the

"Middle Ages" in which Jesus' crucifixion was seen as "the ultimate act of atonement," and "[by] his suffering," Anderson writes, "Christ was paying off the enormous debts incurred through human sinfulness."[670]

4.1.1.3. Satisfaction Theory and the Biblical Narrative

Although Anselm's atonement theology corresponds with New Testament soteriology, its compatibility is not attributable to his biblical exegesis but his *remoto Christo* methodology formatted in the Socratic dialogue. This approach has been both commended and criticized by theologians since the publication of his treatise. Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker for instance write,

> Anselm achieved [in his treatise] what he set out to do—namely, to write a logical explanation for the necessity of Jesus Christ's death on the cross. He used a framework and imagery taken, nor from the Bible feudalistic system of his day. Anselm's work matches those of the New Testament writers in a key methodological way. Like them, he sought to interpret the cross with images easily intelligible to the people of this era. This is where Anselm offers us a positive model as he challenges us not to rely simply on the same metaphors that Paul or the author of Hebrews used in a culture and time very distant from his or ours.[671]

Though Green and Baker are appreciative of Anselm's contextualization of atonement theology, they find the general premises of satisfaction theory problematic since they believe, "Anselm offers a less-than-biblical view of the cross—not because he uses terms like *vassal* or *satisfaction* that are foreign to biblical writing on the cross but because he uses them in a way that gives the cross and the atonement a meaning at odds with that

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fathers along the way of telling the history. But a story constructed directly from this language necessarily comes out a genuine myth. As such, it is independent of the history told by the Old Testament and the Gospels." Robert Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, *Triune God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 187-88. (From Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 234, fn. 16)

[670] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 9.

[671] Green and Baker. *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 131.

found in the Bible."[672] Even those who agree with the major tenets of satisfaction theory find peculiar some of his conclusions because they cannot be substantiated by Scripture. John Stott for instance who is in general agreement with Anselm's theology of the cross nonetheless believes that "[Anselm's] scholastic reasoning took him beyond the boundaries of the biblical revelation."[673]

Criticisms such as Stott's are warranted since some of Anselm's views, though compatible with the principles of logic, are difficult to validate biblically such as, "The rationale whereby the number of angels who have fallen is to be made up for from mankind."[674] Yet the accusation that Anselm's treatise "is not scriptural since he does not cite any texts to sustain his argument,"[675] is unfounded since contemporary translations of *Cur Deus Homo* highlight Anselm's various direct quotations of Scripture.[676] Perhaps in anticipation of this criticism, Anselm's final chapter of his treatise titled, "That by the things which have been said, the truth of the Old Testament and the New has been proved," offers a challenge his detractors, who believe his approach to be incongruent with Scripture. Anselm writes,

> If we have said anything that ought to be corrected, I do not refuse correction. But if it is corroborated by the Testimony of the Truth, as we think we have by means of logic discovered, we ought to attribute this not to ourselves but to God, who is blessed throughout all ages. Amen.[677]

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[672]Green and Baker. *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 131-132. (authors' emphasis)

[673] Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 119.

[674] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.16.

[675] David Smith, *The Atonement in Light of History and the Modern Sprit* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), 85. (From Hannah, "Anselm on the Doctrine of the Atonement," 338.)

[676] Reference Anselm, *Why God Became Man*, Davies and Evans eds., 260-356.

[677] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, II.22. Anderson (*Sin: A History*, 189-190), in defense of Anselm's implicit use of Scripture writes, "The failure to see the biblical grounds for [*Cur Deus Homo*] is predictable for two reasons. First, few readers of Anselm recognize the deeply biblical roots of the debt metaphor (hence, one of the reasons for this book). In addition, Anselm claims his argument will demonstrate *remoto Christo* (that is, by bracketing what revelation says about Christ's divine nature) whether we need to affirm those very things to make sense of our salvation. One should bear in mind, however, that this temporary bracketing of the church's claims about Christ does not require him to leave aside scriptural influences."

Although some of Anselm's speculative reasoning in *Cur Deus Homo* cannot be verified biblically, these conceptions are incidental to his main argument that supports his theory such as his construal of sin as debt and Christ's satisfactory recompense made through the cross.

Anselm's notion of satisfaction which is primary to his atonement theology, similar to his conception of sin as debt finds precedence, according to Anderson, in Second Temple soteriology. Anderson writes, "the doctrine of satisfaction is already present in later books of the Hebrew Bible and that this idea is inextricably linked to the concept of sin as debt. As soon as sin is perceived in this fashion, the doctrine of satisfaction emerges."[678] Anderson finds a direct correspondence between debt and satisfaction in Isaiah 40 for instance when Israel is described as making "satisfaction" for their obligations through their decades spent in Babylonian captivity. "God's saving act" in Isaiah, Anderson contends, "should be characterized as an act of redemption (*gĕ'ullâh*), that is, a release of individuals from their bondage in slavery."[679] Through the long punishment Israel has endured for their sin, according to Isaiah, "her debt has been satisfied."[680]

Satisfaction theory, then, can also be supported in the New Testament, Anderson demonstrates, since language had considerable influence on the New Testament authors in their explication of the cross. This is expressed in Colossians 2 for example, "having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross" (v.14). This specific text, Anderson notes, was "central to early Christianity and may be the most cited New Testament passage on the subject of

[678] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 44.
[679] Ibid., 46.
[680] Ibid.

atonement."[681] Given the relationship between satisfaction theory and biblical narrative soteriology, Anderson concludes that "Anselm's much celebrated treatise owes its inspiration to the biblical metaphor of sin as a debt. To the degree that one accepts this metaphor as a basic building block for a doctrine of the atonement, Anselm's great work should remain a point of departure for theological exploration."[682]

4.2. Anselmian Atonement Theology for Today

Among the important themes that have emerged from this comparative study of the three atonement types is that their various conceptions of the "problem," namely, human sin, strongly informs their perception of the "solution," that is, the cross. This suggests that attentiveness to the problem is essential for articulating an atonement theology that is built on Scripture. Since the dramatic type of Aulén and Weaver groups sin with other "evil forces" of death and the devil that have subjected humanity, liberation then comes in the form of Christ's victory through his death and resurrection. The subjective type of Abelard which conceives of sin as "consent to evil" that has caused social division necessitates a solution that involves Jesus' perfect example in life and death which causes repentance and a change in disposition. Objective theorists such as Anselm and Calvin conceive of human sin as a "debt" or "penalty" to be paid that has separated them from God. The solution then lies in the death of Christ that pays the penalty of human sin and reconciles them to God. When comparing these views, the objective type has been shown to be more compatible with the conception of both the problem and solution according to the anthropology and soteriology, respectively,

[681] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 114.
[682] Ibid., 202.

emerging from biblical narrative theology. Further demonstrating this comparatively better connection with the biblical narrative will occupy the remaining content of the present chapter that will culminate in suggested appropriations of the objective type for atonement theology today.

4.2.1. Biblical Narrative Theology and the Problem of Sin

4.2.1.1. Biblical Narrative Theology and Original Sin

The objective type's comparative consistency with Scripture is attributable to their anthropology that forms the basis of their atonement theology. This view is disclosed by Wright and Matera whose study reveals that the human predicament, fundamentally, is marked by sin which separates them from God. This theme is consistent throughout the diverse literature that comprises the Old and New Testaments. This is further supported by Anderson's work which discloses the specific effects of sin and offers important details concerning this problem that defines the human situation. Anderson's study reveals the shift in metaphors from First Temple thinking about sin as a "burden," or "stain," to a "debt" in the Second Temple era which informed the New Testament writers, affected particularly how sin is to be remediated. Sin because it is "some-'thing,'"[683] cannot be simply eradicated through repentance as subjective theorists suggest but requires a corresponding physical solution, that is, payment in physical currency. This view also stands in opposition to the dramatic type's which proposes that the problem can be solved through a cosmological battle apart from humanity making restitution as the primary offenders.

[683] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, x.

The gravity with which the objective type of atonement theology construes the problem of sin further differentiates them from subjective and dramatic models yet locates their view within the canonical narrative. For instance, in Anselm's theology "trivial sin is infinitely serious"[684] because it is an affront to God's honor, or a disruption of the order of the universe. Anselm explains, "This is how seriously we sin, whenever we knowingly do anything, however small, contrary to the will of God. For we are always in his sight, and it is always the teaching he gives us that we should not sin."[685] This strong conception of sin is attributed to his view of original sin which is likewise compatible with biblical anthropology and is disclosed in the second theme, the "Fall," that comprises Wright's five-part thematic structure. This theme greatly informed Jewish theology which in turn influences New Testament hamartiology. Original sin renders the human predicament particularly dismal since they are held completely accountable for sin and unable offer restitution proportionate to this offense. This important biblical view of the human person though is weakened in the anthropology of the alternative types and a particularly unpopular conception in our contemporary culture. Edward Oakes on the topic original sin writes,

> No doctrine inside the precincts of the Christian Church is received with greater reserve and hesitation, even to the point of outright denial, than the doctrine of original sin. Of course in a secular culture like ours, any number of Christian doctrines will be disputed by outsiders, from the existence of God to the resurrection of Jesus. But even in those denominations that pride themselves on their adherence to the orthodox dogmas of the once-universal Church, the doctrine of original sin is met with either embarrassed silence, outright denial, or at a minimum a kind of halfhearted lip service that does not exactly deny the doctrine but has no idea how to place it inside the devout life.[686]

[684] Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 230.
[685] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.21.
[686] Edward T. Oakes, "Original Sin: A Disputation," *First Things* 87 (1998): 16.

Both Anselm and Calvin's conception of original sin though does not propose, primarily, a negative anthropology since they both affirm that God created humanity, originally, "very good" (Gen. 1:31) and designed to enjoy a loving relationship with their Creator. Yet Adam's disobedience of God's command, coupled with subsequent volitional sin, has severed this relationship and, together with humanity's inability to make satisfactory recompense, renders the human situation especially dire.

Since the premise of original sin grounds biblical anthropology, it is an essential starting point for understanding the problem and, accordingly, the solution. Although Oakes has highlighted the current unpopularity of this doctrine, its detestation is not a recent phenomenon but can be traced at least to medieval era of Abelard who posted a comparatively higher anthropology. This view informed the work of later theologians, according to Aulén, such as Friedrich Schleiermacher and Albrecht Ritschl in which sin was "all together weakened,"[687] and its abolition contingent only upon contrition and a proper influence. Those who make this suggestion, according to Anselm, demonstrate that they "have not yet considered how heavy the weight of sin is."[688] For Anselm, the reason humanity cannot make adequate restitution is they are giving to God, in turning from evil, and administering acts of kindness, that which is already owed to God. The currency that is raised from these actions cannot satisfy the irreparable damage done to God's creation through human sin both volitionally and through their inherited guilt. Further, a proper understanding of Adam's original transgression would locate sin as a subjective problem, whose consequence is "death" rather than part of an extrinsic force "standing behind" humanity as Aulén suggests. If the doctrine of original sin was

[687] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 148.
[688] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.21.

adequately considered by both subjective and dramatic theorists, they would have had to propose a different solution since the problem involves human accountability directly to God for sin and human inability to make adequate recompense. Anderson in his study can justifiably conclude therefore that the "biblical metaphor of sin as debt," should be considered "a basic building block for a doctrine of atonement."[689]

4.3. The Solution to Sin in Biblical Narrative Theology

What further distinguishes objective theory, in addition to their conception of sin, is their emphasis on the necessity of the cross. Only Christ's death can rescue humanity from their dire predicament by offering them the forgiveness of sins and, consequently, reconciliation with God.[690] God's verdict on sin is death. Jesus dies instead of humanity since he alone is without sin and therefore can pay the debt of sin comparable to the offense. This is distinct from subjective theory which prioritizes the life of Christ with cross serving primarily a "pedagogical function"[691] that brings humanity to an awareness of their sin. This view is also different from the dramatic conception of the cross which emphasizes Christ's "victory" over the forces of evil. The value of the death of Christ is diminished since it is construed as subordinate to his resurrection.

Although the primacy with which objective theorists place on the death of Christ is compatible with biblical soteriology, their view has been criticized since it excludes the importance of his ministry marked by healings, teachings, and miracles. This is one of major contemporary critiques of Anselm's theory especially from Weaver whose

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[689] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 202.

[690] Vanhoozer ("The Glory of the Atonement," 389) notes, "the acid test of any doctrine of atonement: Does it explain the necessity of Jesus' sufferings on the cross?" (Vanhoozer's emphasis)

[691] Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 165.

Mennonite theology considers the life and death of Christ valuable since it teaches members of his community to deny earthly pleasures, and advance God's reign primarily through the rejection of violence. This criticism is not just common to Anselm's detractors but also some of his proponents such as G. R. Evans who notes that although *Cur Deus Homo* does emphasize Christ's suffering, weariness, hunger, and the pain of his death, Anselm offers little detail that "might make him seem [too] human and approachable," and, accordingly, "imputes no feelings to him."[692] Yet the primary subject of Anselm's treatise is the atonement and views the Christian life as an effect of humanity's reconciliation with God. Anselm in his treatise is trying to resolve primarily the problem of the human predicament marked by their alienation from God and not interpersonal relationships which is a tertiary concern. Anselm does address this issue in other works on prayer and meditation which are deeply emotive and move penitents to a confidence in God's forgiveness, care, and love.[693] The canonical narrative discloses that the "new creation," which enables the redeemed to follow Christ's example, is predicated upon the antecedent of the remission of sin through the cross.

Another criticism of objective theorists, in addition offering limited attention to Jesus' ministry, is the importance of Christ' resurrection which likewise appears unnecessary in this type. In his criticism of penal substitution's neglect of the resurrection Boyd writes, "if the main problem needing to be addressed by Christ was that God's wrath needed to be appeased, and if the main solution to this problem consisted of God slaying his Son on the cross, one naturally wonders what could possibly be left to be done

[692] G. R. Evans, *Anselm and a New Generation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980), 165.

[693] Flora A. Keshgegian, "The Scandal of the Cross: Revisiting Anselm and His Feminist Critics," *Anglican Theological Review* 82, no. 3 (2000): 486.

once this is completed."[694] This view however is consonant with the biblical narrative which likewise emphasizes the death of Christ to the apparent "neglect" of the resurrection. The Gospels for instance which are construed as "passion narratives written with extended introductions,"[695] is evident particularly in Mark who dedicates the entirety of his text to explicating the importance of Christ's death that brings salvation and, accordingly, life in God's kingdom with the story of the resurrection occupying a comparatively narrow portion of his work. This does not suggest that the resurrection is unimportant to the Bible's soteriological narrative. The resurrection though is not presented as a victory over sin but a conquest over the evil forces consequent of sin. This important distinction is acknowledged by D. A. Carson who writes, "The death-dealing power of sin has been defeated by God's resurrection of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Once again, then, the display of what God has done, supremely in the resurrection of his Son, is occasioned by sin and all its brutal power."[696] The death of Christ makes atonement, that is, it offers humanity the forgiveness of sin. The resurrection, though, is important since it validates the atonement. Thomas Weinandy writes,

> Jesus' suffering on the cross…forms a part of the whole redemptive mystery, for it only finds its salvific significance in the light of the Resurrection and the consequent sending of the Holy Spirit. If the Father had not raised Jesus from the dead, it would not merely mean that we would never have known that on the cross our condemnation had been annulled, nor that we had been reconciled to the Father, nor that our sinful humanity had been put to death. More profoundly, the absence of Jesus' resurrection would simply, but frankly, attest that none of these had actually been accomplished. Jesus would rightly stand discredited and condemned as a blasphemous fraud.[697]

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[694] Boyd, *Christus Victor View*, 99.

[695] Kähler, *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ*, 80 (fn.11).

[696] D. A. Carson, "Sin's Contemporary Significance," in *Fallen: A Theology of Sin*, eds. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 25-26.

[697] Thomas Weinandy, *Jesus the Christ* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, 2003), 117.

Forgiveness of sin through the cross of Christ is a precursor to his victory over death and the devil that is made possible by the power of Jesus' resurrection. That is, death and the devil cannot be conquered unless atonement is first effected.

4.3.1. Atonement Theology and Soteriology

There is a distinction therefore that should be made between atonement theology and soteriology since "salvation" is a product of "atonement," defined as "being one with God (from whom we were previously alienated) and so sharing in the divine life."[698] This distinction is important since it defines specifically the primary work of the cross. Anselm in *Cur Deus Homo* is then explicating atonement theology proper, since he is answering the questions concerning the reason for humanity's alienation from God and how they can be reconciled.[699] His answer is through the self-sacrifice of the God-man, Jesus Christ, whose death provides redemption for humanity which reconciles them to God. The effects of the atonement, which are salvation from death and the devil, and sharing in the divine life, are based upon the antecedent payment of humanity's sin-debt.

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[698] Gerald O'Collins and Edward G. Farrugia, *A Concise Dictionary of Theology*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000), 21.

[699] Although "atonement" provides for Anselm the answer to the question of his treatise, *Cur Deus Homo*, there are competing answers to this same question that predate Anselm's work. Panagiotes Nellas, for instance, drawing upon strands of patristic thought, suggests that even if humanity had not sinned salvation (understood as "completion") would have been necessary since humanity was "incomplete" and regarded as an "infant." Panagiotes Nellas, "Redemption or Deification? 'Why Did God Become Man?' and Nicolas Cabasilas," *Synaxe* 6 (1983): 17-36. These two divergent answers to the same question reflect two competing models, "Sin-Redemption" and "Creation-Deification" respectively. The later view of the "Orthodox Faith" is delineated by Nicolas Cabasilas which focuses on humanity's "perfection in Christ" in lieu of Anselm's "juridical theory of satisfaction." Humanity's salvation, or completion, is realized in their becoming "united with Christ." God became man, therefore, to make humanity "Christlike." Cabasilas' view of the incarnation is consonant with the patristic theology of Irenaeus and Maximus the Confessor, Bogdan G. Bucur (Bogdan G. Bucur, "Foreordained from All Eternity: The Mystery of the Incarnation According to Some Early Christian and Byzantine Writers," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers Number Sixty Two 2008*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot [Washington: Harvard University Press, 2009], 208.) states, which recognizes the purpose of God becoming human as "essentially unrelated to the Fall." Christ, according to Cabasilas, Bucur writes, is "the image of God and paradigm of the human being." Humanity's goal, accordingly, is union with Christ which is end to which "God fashioned" them. (Bucur, "Foreordained from All Eternity," 208)

This essential distinction is absent in the work of subjective theorists such as Abelard whose theology describes the tertiary effects of the cross, namely social reconciliation rather than its primary effect which is reconciliation with God. Likewise for advocates of the dramatic type such as Aulén who makes no distinction between these two disciplines since, according to his Christus Victor, "Salvation is Atonement, and Atonement is Salvation."[700] Aulén contends that this view is consonant with the "classic" conception and in accordance with the New Testament. This view is largely predictable since he conflates sin with other problems when there is a distinction that needs to be made between issues of atonement, which involves the concept of sin, and issues of soteriology, such as overcoming death and the devil. The distinction between atonement theology and soteriology is also neglected in Weaver's narrative Christus Victor model which, in addition to misconstruing the problem of its predecessor, highlights the subjective effects of the cross like Abelard. This lack of differentiation between these two important subjects in narrative Christus Victor theory is noted by Stephen Finlan who writes, "It seems that Weaver is really describing *salvation* and *discipleship,* not *atonement* at all."[701]

Although all of these theories are based on Scripture, the Bible though reveals a distinct causal relationship between the death of Christ and its effects, or atonement and salvation respectively. That is, people are "saved" in Scripture because of what Christ has achieved on the cross, and then they are given "life" instead of "death," liberation from the oppression of the devil and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, live according to the example of Christ's life.

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[700] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 136.
[701] Stephen Finlan, *Problems with Atonement* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 99.

Following Matera's narrative structure then is important for differentiating atonement from its effects. Revisiting the New Testament's "master story" reveals a hierarchical structure to God's redemptive plan, "(1) humanity in need of salvation; (2) the bringer of salvation; (3) the community of the sanctified; (4) the moral life of the sanctified; (5) the hope of the sanctified"[702] Matera contends that each of the latter structural elements are predicated upon humanity's reconciliation of their broken relationship with God through the forgiveness of sins by the death of Christ. The human condition, that is Christian anthropology marked by human sin (theme one), must therefore be the starting point for a view of the atonement since the solution, Jesus Christ (theme two), is intelligible only by first understanding the problem. Objective atonement theorists begin with the presupposition of the problem of human sin. From this perspective, the cross of Christ pays their sin-debt which makes atonement with God. Once reconciled, the theological disciplines of Christology, ecclesiology, ethics, and eschatology are more comprehensible. For Aulén's dramatic type, Christology and soteriology are indistinguishable. This attributable his lack of differentiation between the sin and other evil powers, and follows the same grouping pattern. Abelard's subjective type which believes right moral conduct leads to salvation exposes its incongruity with the proper sequencing of the biblical narrative framework. Prioritizing the problem of sin which leads to the solution, and then its soteriological effects would have therefore resulted in little disparity between these three types. Although their diverse views are important for contributing to the salvation story, Anselm's objective theory offers a comparatively more consistent atonement theology in light of the canonical narrative.

[702] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 428. Matera's first theme, "soteriology," can be subdivided into Christian anthropology, marked by sin, and atonement through the cross in which people receive the forgiveness of sin or salvation.

4.3.2. Theology and the Objective Type

Although this project has focused on the importance of properly understanding both the problem that is human sin, and its corresponding solution, namely the cross of Christ, one of the underlying issues that has emerged in this study is their markedly different conceptions of God. Aulén's citation from *Christus Victor* that began this project addresses the reality of this subtext, "the subject of the Atonement is absolutely central in Christian theology; and it is directly related to that of the nature of God."[703] The perception of God's attributes is perhaps the most important issues motivating these diverse atonement theologies. For instance, in Anselm's theology, God's "honor" is primary importance, and it is the preservation of this attribute that informs his treatise *Cur Deus Homo*. For Calvin, God's attribute of righteousness and sovereignty are preeminent, and what is foremost at stake in his understanding of the cross. Abelard believes God's "love" to be his preeminent quality, and is concerned not to subordinate this attribute to those such as justice. This trait of God is reflected to some extent in theology of Weaver who is particularly concerned to avoid attributing violence to God since it would be contradictory to his love. For Aulén, God's omnipotence is prioritized in his work since he is both "reconciler and the reconciled" regarding atonement, and "victor" over the forces of evil. Further, Aulén acknowledges in *Christus Victor* that "the image of God is the main concern of my book,"[704] which makes explicit what is implicit in all of the atonement theologies discussed in this project.

The importance of their perception of God's nature is evident throughout their respective works since it appears to inform their hermeneutics, anthropology, and,

[703] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 12.
[704] Ibid., ix.

consequently, their atonement theology and soteriology. These different conceptions of God's attribute are all consonant with the canonical narrative, since Scripture reveals the love of God, along with his justice, righteousness, omnipotence, and his detestation of violence. The problem however is that in the process of explicating their atonement theologies, some of God's attributes are subordinated to others. For instance, in Aulén's motif, God's justice is viewed as subservient to his omnipotence. Similarly, justice is subsidiary for Abelard to God's attribute of love. This view is likewise reflected Weaver's theory that denies the notion of God's retribution which infers that he is vindictive and violent. For Anselm and Calvin though the attributes of God such as love and justice are nonhierarchical and noncontradictory since subordinating any of God's attributes would compromise his perfection. That is, if God's love prevails over his willingness to judge, justice would not be served but abrogated which is unbefitting God. Anselm in particular was burdened to reconcile these qualities of God in all of his treatises, and offers by comparison the most convincing account of this possibility.[705]

The mutuality of God's attributes in Anselm's theory is exhibited at the cross where God's justice in love intersects. God's judgment on sin is evident since humanity is held accountable for the damage they have done to God's universe because of their disobedience. Yet God's love is equally apparent since he desires reconciliation with humanity. Since "God and sin cannot abide with each other,"[706] in his grace and mercy God condescends to the world to save humanity from their predicament. Satisfaction theory then reconciles God's attributes, principally his justice and love, which are often construed as mutually exclusive. This dimension of Anselm's atonement theology is

[705] Anselm's "Monologion" and "Proslogion" for instance offer a comparatively thorough study of God's nature.

[706] Weinandy, *Jesus the Christ*, 107.

often misinterpreted by some of his critics such Darby Kathleen Ray who writes, "Why…must God make a relatively narrow construal of justice (satisfaction, compensation) the precondition of God's mercy (forgiveness)? Why are mercy and compassion treated by Anselm as 'secondary' attributes of God—subsets of God's 'goodness' but always at the mercy, so to speak, of justice, order, and power?"[707] Among the major reasons why Anselm accentuates God's honor specifically in *Cur Deus Homo* is that God's qualities like justice, order, and power are constitutive to his argument yet this do not exclude God's attributes of love and mercy. Contrary to his critics, the subtext of his argument suggests that if any of God's qualities are accentuated in Anselm's treatise it would be God's mercy not his justice because God offered humanity, under not compulsion, an avenue of reconciliation through the death of the God-man, Jesus Christ. The importance of resolving God's attributes is expressed by some of Anselm's contemporary defenders such as John D. Hannah who writes,

> God in His nature is many-faceted, with seemingly, though not actually, contradictory attributes (cf., e.g., His love, wrath, mercy, holiness, righteousness). He is absolute justice and grace; each has their perspective spheres. Also, in order for God to bring men to Himself, His absolute justice necessitated a specific method of procurement, but since He was under no necessity to redeem men, what He did was of unprompted unconditioned mercy and grace. Justice looks to the nature of Atonement, and grace looks to a motivating cause in the nature of God. Not one of the attributes is neglected or set aside in the justification of a sinner; all are equally satisfied. While God has many characteristics, He is a single essence who cannot contradict Himself.[708]

The nonhierarchical attributes of God such as love, mercy, and justice are evident throughout the canonical narrative and the fact that they are noncompetitive and non-contradictory is indicative of God's perfection. Both Anselm and Calvin likewise care

[707] Darby Kathleen Ray, "Anselm of Canterbury," in *Empire and the Christian Tradition*, eds. Kwok Pui-Lan, Don Compier, and Jorge Rieger (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 132.

[708] Hannah, "Anselm on the Doctrine of Atonement," 340-341.

most to maintain the congruity of God's attributes which is another distinguishing characteristic of the objective type.

4.3.3. Christology and the Objective Type

An additional distinction among the three atonement types centers on their divergent conceptions of the person of Christ, or Christology proper. For subjective theorists, including Weaver's narrative Christus Victor theory, this subject is comparatively inconsequential since the content of their proposals dedicate little to no space explicating how, for instance, theirs views of Jesus are compatible with Chalcedon Christology. This subject then is what differentiates classic Christus Victor from Weaver's contemporary retrieval since the major critique of Anselm's theory by Aulén is not its avocation of God-sanctioned violence but satisfaction's theory mistaken Christology. Anselm, according to Aulén, theorized that the humanity of Christ is what effects atonement for human sin and not his divinity which is contrary to important passages on the topic of redemption such as 2 Cor. 5:19. Yet Anselm adequately considered the Christological question since it is the primary focus of his treatise *Cur Deus Homo*.[709] Anselm's answer is consonant with the narrative structure of the Bible. Both the humanity and divinity are essential to Anselm, and like God's attributes, are without contradiction. After clarifying his anthropology, he arrives at the conclusion that humanity is in a position from which they are unable to extricate themselves and are in need of an act of divine intervention to procure their salvation. Anselm deduces,

> Now, there is nothing superior to all that exists which is not God—except God. But the obligation rests with man, and no one else, to make payment referred to.

[709] Anselm offers an extended study of Christology in, Anselm of Canterbury, "On the Incarnation of the Word," 233-259.

> Otherwise mankind is not making recompense…[Since] no one can pay except God, and no one ought to pay except man: it is necessary that a God-Man should pay it.[710]

The humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ are essential to satisfaction theory which is consistent with the Christology of the biblical narrative and another primary distinction between Anselm's theory and the alternative atonement types.

The importance of maintaining Chalcedonian Christology, which was a central concern to later theologians such as Anselm, Calvin, and Aulén, is largely missing in current discourse on atonement theology.[711] The early church proffered a high Christology, according to the New Testament study of Matera, and their view of the person of Christ was instrumental to their explication of the cross.[712] This same concern though is absent in current proposals. Therefore the entire subject of atonement is susceptible to criticisms such as its avocation of "divine child abuse" since the "Father"

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[710] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I.12. Visser and Williams in their work on Anselm further clarify that "only a God-man as defined by the Council of Chalcedon can make the recompense that God cannot fail to offer." They write, "If…these two natures, as wholes, are said to be somehow conjoined to a limited extent whereby man and God are distinct from one another and not one and the same, it is impossible that both should bring about what it is necessary should happen. For God will not do it because it will not be his obligation to do it, and a man will not do it because he will not be able to. In order, therefore, that a God-Man should bring about what is necessary, it is essential that the same one person who will make the recompense should be perfect God and perfect man. For he cannot do this if he is not true God, and he has no obligation to do so if he is not a true man. Given, therefore, that it is necessary for a God-Man to be found in whom the wholeness of both natures is kept intact, it is no less necessary for these two natures to combine, as wholes, in one person, in the same way as the body and the rational soul coalesce into one human being. For otherwise it cannot come about that one and the same person may be perfect God and perfect man." Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 229.

[711] A contemporary strand of thought that retrieves the import of Chalcedon Christology regarding redemption can be found in the work of Meredith G. Kline who suggests that it requires the "glorified Christ" (or "Spirit-Lord") to recreate the image of God in fallen humanity. Meredith G. Kline, "Creation in the Image of the Glory-Spirit," *Westminster Theological Journal* 39, no. 2 (1977): 262. A high Christology is also reiterated in the work of Jarl Fossum who highlights the New Testament language of "Glory" (or "Power") to describe Christ that is located in existent Jewish sources. Jarl Fossum, "Colossians 1.15-18a in the Light of Jewish Mysticism and Gnosticism," *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 191.

[712] Matera (*New Testament Christology*, 46) writes, "The name 'Jesus'," in the Gospel of Matthew for instance, "indicates what the Messiah must do: save his people from their sins [Matt. 1:21]."

appears to have advocated the death of the "Son."[713] Dissonance between the Father and Son though is unsupported in New Testament Christology. God the Son, rather, gave himself out of love for humanity, and this gift was neither obligatory nor coerced.[714] Further, Scripture does not attribute the death of the Son to the Father but to "sinful humans" whose debt, Anselm suggests, was "responsible for putting Jesus to death."[715] Proper Christology therefore is contingent upon biblical soteriology since the former is enlightened by the latter. This apposite interchange is at the heart of *Cur Deus Homo*. Visser and Williams writes,

> for Anselm, soteriology comes first; only when we understand what Christ must *do* can we understand what Christ must *be*. The work of Christ is to repair the breach that human sin introduced into the relationship between God and humanity. Anselm argues in *Cur Deus Homo* that this work can be accomplished only by a God-man: one person in two natures, fully divine and fully human…Anselm argues that Christian soteriology leads ineluctably to a Chalcedonian Christology.[716]

Anselm's Christology reflects Chalcedonian Christology and both are compatible with the biblical narrative. Similarly, because there is a direct correspondence between Christology and soteriology, this suggests that the objective type also represents the Chalcedonian view of the work of Christ.[717]

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[713] Joanne Carlson Brown's noted article, "Divine Child Abuse," is indicative of this critique. (Joanne Carlson Brown, "Divine Child Abuse," *Daughters of Sarah* 18, no. 3 (1992): 24-28.)

[714] Leanne Van Dyk offers a more extensive defense of the objective type from a Trinitarian perspective in light of these accusations. (Leanne Van Dyk, "Do Theories of Atonement Foster Abuse?" *Dialog* 35, no. 1 [1996]: 21-25.) Underscoring the Christology of the objective type is also important for answering the critique of liberation theologians that regard this view as "too celestial and not terrestrial enough" (Park, *Triune Atonement*, 13) since it is God in Christ who came to earth to make recompense for human sin through his death on the cross.

[715] Martens, "Quest for a Nonviolent Anabaptist Atonement," 300. Martens references Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*, II.14-15, to support his position.

[716] Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 213. (Visser's and William's emphasis)

[717] Robert Barron offers further details of Chalcedon Christology, "According to the formulary of the Council of Chalcedon, the human nature of Jesus is not compromised, truncated, or undermined in the process of becoming united to a divine nature. Rather, the two come together 'without mixing, mingling, or confusion' in a hypostatic union, producing one who is perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity." Robert Barron, *The Priority of Christ: Toward a Postliberal Catholicism* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008), 17.

4.4. Biblical Narrative Theology and the Atonement Types

The biblical story, though, contains elements from which all three types draw, and therefore each model has something to contribute to contemporary soteriology. Yet concerning the topic of atonement theology proper, it is the objective type that finds greater continuity with the biblical view since it more accurately discloses the problem of sin and the solution that is the cross. Although atonement theologians are dependent upon Scripture to validate their claims,[718] Anselm has demonstrated that biblical soteriology can be authenticated rationally as demonstrated in his *remoto Christo* approach. Calvin though relies almost exclusively upon Scripture offering direct biblical citations regularly throughout his work. Although citing the Bible does not guarantee continuity with its overarching narrative, Calvin's atonement theology demonstrates its compatibility since he begins with the premise of humanity's estrangement, and ends in their reconciliation with God through the death of Christ. Although Calvin and Anselm prioritize different methodologies to support their views, they arrive at similar conclusions and both are consonant with the biblical narrative structure.

Aulén in *Christus Victor* though contends that his retrieval of the "classic" view is by comparison the most biblical account of the atonement. Yet his book dedicates only a single chapter to a discussion of the New Testament and restricts his study, primarily, to

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Barron's citation from Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 39.

[718] Robert Morey, *Studies in Atonement Theology* (Southbridge, MA: Crowne Publications, 1989), 1. Morey states, "The doctrine of atonement is exclusively a subject of special revelation and thus we are entirely dependent upon the Scriptures. Christianity is unique and singular in its concept of the atonement. We will search history in vain to find another religion which developed the concept of God becoming man to die as the sinner's substitute. [Other religions] always views man as seeking God and providing for his own salvation while Christianity views God as seeking man and providing salvation for him."

letters of the Pauline corpus. Most of the Old Testament is neglected, and further how Second Temple thought concerning the problem of human sin and its solution is nonexistent. The same observation is applicable to Weaver's focus on the "story of Jesus" that supports his view. Although his exegetical work is more inclusive that Aulén's, the main texts upon which his theory is based is limited to the ethical principles of the Gospel of Luke, and more specifically Jesus' nonviolent disposition. Though the "warrior motif" highlighted by Boyd is comparatively more prevalent in Scripture, verses used to support this view such as 1 John 3:8, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil," neglect to highlight the problem of sin which is the reason, according to this same text, humanity is subject to the devil. Advocates of the dramatic type, consequently, are employing passages related to the effects of the atonement and rather than how atonement is effected. A similar observation is applicable to subjective theorists who value texts which demonstrate Christ's moral example for humanity in lieu of those that support the equally important concepts of sacrifice and substitution relative to the cross. Further, Abelard whose work hinges upon his hermeneutic of God's "love" consciously avoids texts that challenge his premises. Abelard, like many of his later adherents, therefore evades juridical language which likewise prominent in Scripture. Indispensable New Testament literature such as Hebrews that discloses the importance sacrifice, in light of Israel's sacrificial system, which are essential for offering greater clarity to the meaning of the cross are often discounted or dismissed as anachronistic. Yet these books are valuable for making a contribution to the biblical narrative and for connecting Old and New Testament soteriology.

The viability of objective atonement theology lies in its ability to accommodate the rich diversity of the biblical literature. Since both Calvin and Anselm's work emerges naturally from biblical atonement theology, they are not reduced to dismissing or avoiding texts that contradict their view of the cross. Objective theory can readily accommodate First and Second Temple literature to support their theology of the cross along with the contributions of the various "traditions" and "Other Voices" highlighted by Matera that comprise New Testament soteriology. Important early church concepts that are used to explicate their atonement theology such as "sacrifice" (Heb. 9:26) and expiation (1 John 4:10) are essential for delineating the soteriology of the objective type. Their model's compatibility with the diverse literature of Scripture can be attributed to their view of the problem of human sin and the solution which is the cross of Christ that converges with the canonical narrative.

4.5. Conclusion: Anselmian Atonement Theology for Today

4.5.1. The Contribution of Biblical Narrative Theology

Among the primary contributions of this project to contemporary discourse on atonement theology is the importance of interpreting and appropriating specific texts from Scripture through the lens of biblical narrative theology. The Bible remains essential to studies in Christian theology as the above atonement theorists have demonstrated. Therefore a consistent hermeneutic that adequately considers all of the diverse literature of Scripture is essential. This will encourage varied theories on topics such as the cross that are complimentary rather than contradictory, and therefore better serve important subjects in Christian theology like atonement. Disclosing this narrative to

assist systematic theologians is among the primary reasons for Matera's undertaking of this project in New Testament theology.[719] His work was complimented by Wright's Second Temple perspective which provided a larger framework for the first century church theology that together created a consistent "biblical narrative" that connected the Old and New Testaments. This continuity is attributable to its underlying soteriological narrative which reveals God's desire of a restored relationship with humanity that was separated because of human sin. To understand the solution, that is, the cross, the problem must first be understood.

The exegetical work of Anderson was instrumental in this regard. Anderson's study of biblical metaphors for sin, influenced by the work of Ricoeur, revealed the shift in metaphors from sin as creating a "burden" in the First Temple period to that of a "debt" in the Second Temple era which informed the New Testament writers. His work was critical to the project since it revealed the particularities of the "problem" that God would have to resolve. Namely, that sin is concrete reality taking the form of a financial obligation owed, which necessitates the type of "solution" required which is the cross that pays the currency of human debt. As Anderson has stated, to the extent of that scholars accept this metaphor, the objective theory of Anselm and Calvin should be recognized as Scripture's primary view of the atonement and therefore the most preferable of the three types.

The primary goal of this project though was not to demonstrate the primacy of objective theory to the other types, nor to exhibit its compatibility with the biblical

[719] Matera (*New Testament Theology*, xxx) writes, "there are some good reasons to engage in the task: a New Testament theology can provide readers with an overview of the New Testament; it makes important connections among the writings of the New Testament that one might otherwise overlook; it wrestles with the unity of God's revelation in Christ; its results can be to systematic theology."

narrative, but to articulate the human predicament apart from God, and their consequent need of atonement. Similarly, Anselm and Calvin, like the New Testament authors Matera has noted, were writing neither history nor theology but cared most to share their experience of salvation made possible through the cross which offers the forgiveness of sin, and therefore reconciliation with God. This "good news," according to believers, "unmasks the human condition,"

> [and people] begin to comprehend the predicament in which they find themselves apart from the gospel. They are conscious of the power of sin and their former alienation from God. They understand that what they once thought was true was a lie. Now that they dwell in the light, they realize that they had been living in darkness.[720]

G. B. Caird in his study of early church theology further validates Matera's view. Caird writes, "The New Testament was written by those who had entered on a new life of freedom and dignity, opened to them by the forgiveness of sins, and who believed that their experience was offered to all human beings as God's universal answer to the world's universal need."[721] God's method of forgiving sin though is not unique to the New Testament, as Wright has demonstrated, but is grounded in Second Temple thought in which sin was forgiven through the currency raised such as during Israel's captivity to Babylon. The early church who shared this worldview believed their sins to be forgiven in a similar way though not through the currency raised through their corporeal punishment but through Christ's death on the cross. "Through God's work in Christ," Matera notes, "they now stood in a new relationship to the Creator."[722] The early church then considered themselves to be a redeemed people of God and to be a light to the

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[720] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 428.

[721] G. B. Caird, *New Testament Theology*, ed. L. D. Hurst (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 74.

[722] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 428.

nations calling them into a restored relationship with God their Creator through the gospel that they preached. Theologians such as Anselm and Calvin were continuing this gospel message since they highlight the need for atonement that is antecedent to new life in Christ. They take into consideration the seriousness and ubiquity of human sin, their inability to make recompense, which leads to death, and their consequent alienation from God. The gospel message is that God comes to earth to pay the debt of sin humanity could not and bring restoration to this relationship and the prospect of a new life in the kingdom of God.

The above summary is descriptive of Matera's "master story" that begins with the theme of Christian anthropology then discloses God's salvific work in Christ through the atonement. Although this narrative "does not occur, in its entirety, in every single New Testament writing," Matera writes, "the underlying drama of the narrative—the need for salvation, redemption in Christ, the appearance of a new community, a new way of life, and a new hope for the future—is present in all three great "traditions" and in the "Other Voices" of the New Testament."[723] Matera, similar to Wright, recognizes that despite the variety of authors, and the different contexts from which they are writing, the Bible presents a "diverse unity" whose merging theme is the message of God's salvation and his concern for a relationship with his creation. Matera concludes,

> The unity of New Testament theology is a diverse unity: a unity that expresses itself in a multiplicity of ways because no one way can fully capture the mystery of God in Christ. To insist upon only one way is to deny the mystery. To insist upon only one way is to foolishly imagine that human beings can comprehend the mystery that is God. The diverse unity of the New Testament is the only unity of the New Testament. It is the only unity that stands in awe before the mystery.[724]

[723] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 480.
[724] Ibid.

The motive behind the New Testament witness, was their "experience of salvation,"[725] and concern to share this gracious gift of God with others. Understanding this motivation then is essential for accurately interpreting their work. This theme of soteriology, that unifies the work of the New Testament authors, is foundational to thematic structure of the biblical narrative, that begins with "Creation," then the "Fall," and ends with "Jesus," and "the church" according to Wright's structural framework. This project has revealed the importance of maintaining this sequential order. To misconstrue the problem, which is human sin, will lead to a mistaken solution, namely the cross and result in an atonement theology that is incompatible with the soteriology of the biblical narrative.

4.5.2. The Contribution to Theology and Christology

In addition to contributing to current theological discourse through the use of biblical narrative theology, this project attempted to articulate the diverse and noncompetitive attributes of God. Analogous to the "diverse unity" that characterizes the New Testament writers, God's attributes, particularly those of his love and justice are presented in the biblical narrative as nonhierarchical and complimentary. Although each atonement theorists recognize these attributes, objective theorists such as Anselm and Calvin are concerned most to integrate these characteristics. Human disobedience has irreparable damage to God's created order. Logic demands, and Scripture affirms, that to overlook the harm sin has done to people and their environment would be a complete abrogation of justice. God, in his love and mercy and unwillingness that any should perish, though condescends to the world in the person of Jesus Christ whose satisfies his demands of justice. God's attributes of love and justice therefore intersect at the cross

[725] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, xxviii.

since God alone makes the payment for sin that was beyond the financial means of humanity. God's justice in not therefore subordinate to his love but the two are reconciled in God's inimitable plan of salvation. Yet criticism of Anselm and Calvin work that appears to prioritize God's justice over his love is not without merit. Although the language of love is present in their work, greater emphasis could have been placed (and needs to be placed) on this divine attribute. One of the objectives of this project then was to call greater attention to the love God has for humanity, attenuated in these proposals, since he desires reconciliation, and is willing to suffer and die as the cost of making atonement.

Another objective of this project was to recover the importance of Christology in current discourse on atonement theology. The high Christology of the early church was instrumental for the explication of their view of the cross. Christology was historically a central feature in atonement theology through the modern era of Aulén's formative work *Christus Victor*. This important theological category though is either diminished or used synonymously with soteriology to the extent that it loses its distinctiveness and significance. Matera's thematic structure offers better clarity for contemporary theology to reveal the difference the New Testament makes between these two theological disciples, their order of importance, and interrelationship. According to Matera, Christology is enlightened by soteriology, and further, soteriology understood by Christian anthropology.[726] This prioritization is compatible with Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* which provides a soteriological answer to his Christological question. Both of which are predicated upon the intelligibility of Christian anthropology. The necessity of Jesus Christ being both "God and man" (*Deus homo*) is articulated in Anselm's treatise,

[726] Matera, *New Testament Theology*, 480.

and vital to his atonement theology. Calvin likewise argues for the importance that it is God in Christ who makes atonement for the sin of the world since, like Anselm, the penalty of sin is a human obligation that only God can pay. This also was the primary concern of Aulén who based his work on the texts like 2 Cor. 5:19, "in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself." While Aulén's theology does appear to diminish the humanity of Christ, and therefore the essentiality of the cross, humanity's liberation required God's victory completed through the God-man, Jesus Christ. All of these views are situated upon Chalcedon Christology that is based on their interpretation of Scripture, which has informed the church's view of the person of Jesus Christ since its inception.

The importance of affirming "biblical" Christology lies not only in its compatibility with the early church, or the foundational creeds of the Christian tradition, but to defend God's character against this doctrine's seemingly negative portrayal of God primarily as angry, violent, and supportive of "child abuse." The fact that it is God who makes atonement though, out of his mercy and love for humanity through the person of Jesus Christ, enervates these accusations. Further, the biblical narrative reveals that the "Son" gives his life volitionally to satisfy the demands of his own justice. Evans concerning this in Anselm's atonement theology view writes, "All these difficulties disappear," concerning objections that the Father compelled the Son to die, "if we realize that the Son was not forced. Here the complex of will, power and necessity resolve itself easily. The Son willed to die."[727] The cross is God's inimitable plan of salvation

[727] Evans, *Anselm*, 75. In response to the critique of God's seeming "vindictiveness" portrayed by the objective type, Placher ("Christ Takes Our Place: Rethinking Atonement," 17) notes, "the pain God endures on the cross is the price love pays for taking sin seriously but refusing to stop loving. In the face of sin, love becomes painful wrath, but in Christ God takes that wrath on God's own self." Also, in reaction to criticisms of this type's apparent avocation of "child abuse" Placher (Ibid.) writes, "Here it is surely important that Christ is not the passive victim of suffering for the sake of keeping things the way they are but one who accepts suffering for the sake of transforming the world."

implemented by God himself. The apparent disconnect between the Father and Son is unsubstantiated in the biblical narrative. Rather, they are two persons sharing one nature working together to procure salvation for humanity. Their "work" reveals best the character of the Father and the Son, and desire for reconciliation with creation. Carson writes, "The plan of redemption for this sinful world is driven by God's undeserved love, most magnificently expressed in the gift of his Son, whose death alone is sufficient to lift the sentence of condemnation."[728] God in Christ, the biblical narrative reveals, abhors the condemnation of humanity but came into the world for the express purpose of paying the price for the forgiveness of their sins which restores their relationship.

4.5.3. The Contribution of Hamartiology

Among the more important contributions to current discourse on atonement theology that has emerged from this study, then, is the importance of beginning with a Christian anthropology that is consonant with the biblical narrative. Humanity, according to Scripture, is in debt to God because of sin, and they incapable of making satisfactory recompense. Therefore humanity is alienated from God, and in a position from which they are unable to extricate themselves.[729] Yet this basic premise that centers on the topic of sin, and its consequences, is largely missing from contemporary Christian discourse. Joseph Ratzinger addressing this issue writes,

> Religious education of whatever kind does its best to evade it. Theater and films use the word ironically or in order to entertain. Sociology and psychology attempt

[728] Carson, "Sin's Contemporary Significance," 25.

[729] Sumner, ("Why Anselm Still Matters," 29) notes that "[we] humans may seem to carry on when we are living alienated from God, but we are like the wasp, severed, who does not yet know he is dead. In other words, the logic of the Bible binds the forgiving of sins and the bestowing of life closely together."

> to unmask it as an illusion or a complex. Even the law is trying to get by more and more without the concept of guilt.[730]

The seriousness with which Anselm and Calvin construe sin therefore appears anachronistic. Few theologians acknowledge the ubiquity of sin based on the conception of Adam's original transgression as Oakes has noted. The human situation is accordingly moderated, and their alienation from the God of "love" inconceivable. Ratzinger further notes that the whole theme of salvation summarized in Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel," has been "halved."[731] This is attributed to contemporary theology's emphasis on the kingdom of God to the near exclusion of humanity's need to repent for their sin. Yet the awareness of one's sin, and the realization that they are consequently alienated from God, is basic to the biblical narrative and, therefore, the gospel message.

Attentiveness to Christian anthropology, then, is instrumental for grounding atonement theology. The Synoptic Gospel writers begin with the presupposition of the human predicament, and this gives their articulation of the gospel context which offers intelligibility and coherency to their delineation of the "good news." This foundational theme is likewise prevalent throughout the Pauline and Johannine traditions along with the Other Voices in a unified way that respects diversity. Their conception of sin though is not an exclusively Christian construct but is based on Second Temple hamartiology. Paul House, in his study of the theology of sin writes, "The Old Testament offers the Bible's oldest and most textured treatments of the doctrine of sin. Beginning with Adam and Eve, sin appears throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, acting as the main problem that

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[730] Joseph Ratzinger, *'In the Beginning…' A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*. trans. Boniface Ramsey (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 62.

[731] Ibid., 61. Ratzinger states that this was the observation of a bishop with whom he was speaking at a synod.

God's redemptive work [in the New Testament] solves."[732] To understand sin, is to comprehend the reason for the cross, which in turn reveals the nature of God. Sin, as Anselm has noted, cannot be simply forgiven by God since this would be an abrogation of divine justice. Caird writes, "To forgive sin by fiat would be to ignore it, to treat it as though it did not exist; like cancelling traffic offenses by abolishing the rules of the road."[733] Without biblical hamartiology, based on the premise of original sin, the imperative of salvation through the cross alone is weakened, which renders discretional the gospel message, and causes contradictions in atonement theology and the gospel message it discloses. Carson writes,

> There can be no agreement as to what salvation *is* unless there is agreement as to that from which salvation rescues us. The problem and the solution hang together: the one explicates the other. It is impossible to gain a deep grasp of what sin is; conversely, to augment one's understanding of the cross is to augment one's understanding of sin.[734]

God's grace is intelligible only in light of humanity's awareness of their sin, and God's mercy and love, recognized at the cross, which also expresses his retributive justice. The attentiveness to human sin, which is indispensable for understanding biblical soteriology, is central to the writings of objective theorists. The retrieval and relocation of this theological category to its primary place in current discourse on systematics then was among the main objectives of this study.

4.5.4. The Contribution to Atonement Theology

[732] Paul R. House, "Sin in the Law," in *Fallen: A Theology of Sin*, eds. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 39.
[733] Caird, *New Testament Theology*, 146.
[734] Carson, "Sin's Contemporary Significance," 22.

Another objective of this project then was to demonstrate the consequences of beginning with an anthropology that lacks sufficient accordance with the canonical narrative. This was revealed by analyzing the writings of main atonement theologies structured under Aulén's tripartite typology. This study has shown that a proper diagnosis of the "problem" is necessary to determine the type of "solution" that is needed. Although all models display some deficiency in this regard, the objective theory of Anselm and Calvin has been demonstrated to be the most compatible with the biblical narrative. According to this view, the answer must involve, primarily, the forgiveness of sins because of humanity's sin-debt is what has separated them from God. Since humanity is unable to make satisfactory recompense, death is the penalty for defaulting on their obligation. Further, because humanity is responsible for their debt, logic demands that they make restitution. Yet because of the ubiquity of sin, the answer must be God who is without sin. Jesus Christ, therefore, pays the sin-debt humanity cannot since he is both God and human and void of original sin. The cross then satisfies the demands of God's justice and is also the preeminent expression of his love for humanity because he desires them to have life instead of death and a renewed relationship. Despite some deficiencies, this view accords best, by comparison, with the main principles of biblical atonement theology disclosed in Matera's New Testament study that is grounded in Jewish theology revealed by Wright.

This project has revealed that when comparing the work of these biblical theologians with the dramatic and subjective types, the compatibility of objective atonement theory with the canonical narrative is decisive. In the dramatic type, because sin is not differentiated from other types of "evil," and further that these forces are

extrinsic to humanity holding them captive, they are compelled to posit a solution that does not deal directly with the subject. Rather, these objective forces are overcome by the victory of Christ's resurrection. Since the subject is removed from this proposed solution, the death of Christ, or the fact that he is both God and man, is rendered inconsequential. Further, humanity is not held accountable for their sin, and can justifiably shift blame for their current state of captivity to the devil which is equally problematic. In subjective theory, which views sin as "consent to evil" or "mimesis," social discord is the main problem the solution must resolve. The influence of Christ achieves this end since his life and death effects a change in the heart and disposition humanity which brings peace instead of social discord. This subjective problem which necessitates a subjective solution is opposite that of the dramatic type yet has the same challenges. Different from Aulén, the humanity of Christ is primary to his divinity, which is different from Chalcedon and biblical Christology that discloses that the two natures are both perfect. Further, the death of Christ in this model is reduced to an instrument of pedagogy by serving to inspire the reconciliation of interpersonal relationships. Additionally, the cross is decidedly less imperative to humanity in this view since they are able to explicate themselves from their situation.[735] This theory though renders the gospel discretional, and places the burden of effecting salvation onto humanity. Both of these types are dissonant with the biblical narrative which has been demonstrated to be attributable to their inattentiveness to the problem of sin. Among the three types, then, objective theory since it begins with biblical

[735] In contrast to this view, and in support of the objective type which proffers the importance of the cross, Packer writes that theorists like Anselm correctly "argued that the necessity of the atonement was absolute," and "believed that if God once resolved to save guilty sinners, then this was the only way he could do it." J. I. Packer, "The Necessity of the Atonement," in *Atonement*, ed. Gabriel N. E. Fluhrer (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010), 7. Packer (Ibid., 5) then concludes, "I am simply saying, a loudly and clearly as I can, that everything rests on the atonement."

anthropology, ends with a solution to the problem that is in accordance with biblical soteriology. This model, as Anderson has stated, therefore should be considered "a point of departure" for contemporary discourse on atonement theology.[736]

Anselm's theory though has been referred to by contemporary theologians as "obsolete," and needs to be interpreted "anew," since it is unable to address the concerns of our present culture.[737] Further, many contemporary liberation and feminist theologians advocate the complete abandonment of the objective type since it can be used as a pretext for violence and abuse. Although the language Anselm uses such as God's "honor" requiring "satisfaction" is a reflection of his medieval feudal context, and in need of synonyms less dated, the concepts they represent are proven to be valid in comparison to the alternative types. Southern's noted defense of *Cur Deus Homo*, "everything of importance in Anselm's argument can survive the removal of every trace of feudal imagery,"[738] authenticates the prospect of its contemporary viability. The continued relevance of this type has been shown to be attributable to its biblical compatibility. To alter or abandon the important concepts which the language of objective theory represents for the sake of cultural relevance, is to therefore to compromise the biblical anthropology and soteriology upon which it is built. Robert Barron in his assessment of this view writes,

> If we abandon the conviction that the death of Jesus was not simply an historical accident but an expression of God's intentionality, then we fly in the face of the overwhelming bulk of the tradition *and* of the New Testament itself. An interpreter would make a mockery of the Gospels were she to remove from the texture of the narrative the *dei*, the divinely grounded necessity of Jesus's going to the cross. And were one to propose that the Pauline letters could be read on the

[736] Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 202.
[737] Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 89.
[738] Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape*, 221.

> supposition that the cross of Christ was merely the consequence of political forces, he would be running consistently against the grain of those texts.[739]

The cross is central to God's plan of redemption, and its value cannot be compromised since it is the primary mechanism that procures salvation. The effectiveness of the gospel rests on in its ability to first "unmask the human condition," to expose their consequent need of atonement with God.

4.5.5. Contemporary Implications and Summary

Since "the subject of the Atonement is absolutely central in Christian theology," and further that "it is directly related to that of the nature of God,"[740] an accurate view of the cross is imperative. Accuracy begins with a Christian anthropology that is compatible with Scripture which in turn will disclose the characteristics of atonement and, accordingly, soteriology. Matera has demonstrated that all subsequent theological disciplines, Christology, ecclesiology, ethics, and eschatology are predicated on an understanding of soteriology therefore a precise interpretation of Bible's story of salvation is important since it lays a solid foundation for all other studies. Among the primary objectives of this project was to demonstrate this importance of this premise through the use of Scripture which continues to be among the primary sources for theologians. Yet employment of the Bible does not guarantee an accurate conception of the cross, as this project has revealed, since there is a considerable divergence between the three leading types of atonement theology, all of which claim biblical compatibility. Interpreting Scripture, rather, in light of the overarching canonical narrative has proven to

[739] Robert Barron, *The Priority of Christ: Toward a Postliberal Catholicism* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008), 104.

[740] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 12.

be by comparison a more reliable approach. This methodology discourages selective appropriations of passages to support one's subjective conceptions, and remains faithful to Christian tradition and yet relevant for today.

This approach, though, is valid only to the degree that biblical theology itself is considered a viable alternative. Historical criticism is skeptical of this methodology, as noted in this study, and further that a unified narrative can emerge from its diverse literature. Wright has demonstrated though that history and theology are not mutually exclusive. As a member of the "Third Quest" for the historical Jesus, Wright offers his master narrative through the lens of a historical study which reveals no conflict between "faith" and "reason" provided they maintain their respective boundaries of competence. Wright's five-part thematic structure, 1) Creation; 2) Fall; 3) Israel; 4) Jesus; 5) the early church, provides an overall framework for the biblical narrative. His work is also important for supplementing New Testament theology by offering a Jewish context to their work. Together with the work of Matera, the larger "biblical narrative" emerges that has been used in this project to measure the compatibility of the various atonement theologies. Anderson's specific study also fits within Scripture's larger framework. His work offers specific details concerning Second Temple thought, which informed early church hamartiology that was critical to this study. The feasibility of this project then is based upon the contributions these scholars make to biblical narrative theology, and further that their work has been incorporated accurately in this study.

The viability of this project is also predicated upon the practicability of Aulén's typology for revealing the primary issues that distinguish the various atonement theologies. Further that these conceptions of the cross, namely, satisfaction, moral

influence, penal substitution, Christus Victor, and narrative Christus Victor accurately represent the main positions in current theological discourse in this theological discipline. Further, that these diverse views can be categorized within a tripartite typology. Apart from these concerns, this approach has revealed the principal issues at stake, namely, that the problem is construed in markedly different ways which leads to divergent views of the solution that have obscured this important subject.

There have been recent attempts, consequently, to reconcile these divergent types since some feel that "not one but many models of the atonement" are necessary to disclose the "mystery of God's saving work."[741] This project has revealed the multifaceted dimensions of salvation that warrants this attempt. Such as humanity's liberation from death and captivity to the forces of evil, and social reconciliation all of which divulge the varied benefits of God's saving work according to Scripture. Yet an important distinction has also emerged in this study which suggests that there is a causal relationship between atonement and its effect, that is, salvation. This "rich variety" of soteriological features, concomitant in the dramatic and subjective proposals, are describing therefore the effects of the reconciliation, and not explicating a biblical atonement theology proper. Salvation comes through the atonement, according to the biblical narrative, and its advantages consequent of humanity being first reconciled to God. Atonement is effected through the cross of Christ which pays their debt of sin. The various benefits of humanity's atonement with God, which includes life, liberation, and social unity, are then realized.

[741] Joel B. Green, "Kaleidoscopic View" in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, eds. by James Beiby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 185.

This is the primary distinction then between objective theory and the alternative types since the former is not articulating a soteriology but an atonement theology that is in accordance with Scripture. The advantages of the atonement, highlighted by subjective and dramatic theorists, are therefore absent in the objective atonement theology since they are, technically, operating in different spheres of theological inquiry. This is largely the resultant of their differing views concerning the human condition apart from the gospel. The death of Christ for both Anselm and Calvin is imperative since it is the only way by which humanity can be reconciled to God. Their starting point, namely Christian anthropology, which is that of Scripture's, is therefore essential not only for the field of atonement theology, but our present culture it informs. Carson writes, "The contemporary significance of biblical teaching on sin is best grasped, first, when the place of sin within the Bible itself is understood, and, second, when we perceive how desperately our culture needs to be shaped again by what the Bible says about sin."[742] At the cross, God's attributes of love and justice intersect which no single atonement theology can fully explicate. Therefore diverse theories are needed, though they must be unified over the primary anthropological and soteriological themes revealed in the biblical narrative.

[742] Carson, "Sin's Contemporary Significance," 37.

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